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THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

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MARVEL Holiday SPECIAL

CONTENTS:

WOLVERINE in "Zounds O' Silence" by Larry Hama and Michael Golden 1

NEW WARRIORS in "Present Tense" by Fabian Nicieza, Darick Robertson and Larry Mahlstedt 10

SPIDER-MAN in "The Big X-Mas Blackout" by Stan Lee, Steve Lightle and John Costanza 22

THE PUNISHER in "In The Spirit of The Season" By Carl Potts, Rik Levins and Al Milgrom 32

DOC SAMSON in "Revisionist History" by Peter David, John Hebert and Mike DeCarlo 46

THANOS in "Yule Memory" by Jim Starlin, Ron Lim and Terry Austin 55

IRON MAN in "Holiday on Ice" by Sholly Fisch and Tom Morgan 64

DAREDEVIL in "The Rapt Lamb" by Ann Nocenti, Tom Grindberg and Fred Fredricks 73

PIN-UPS by: Darren Auck, Sal Buscema, Ernie Chan, Dave Cockrum, Kerry Gammill, Ron Garney, Steve Lightle, and Rurik Tyler.

Witterstaetter's Witticisms

Horton the elephant! You remember him? How could any of us raised on Dr. Seuss and cats in hats forget?

I never have. Amongst the gobs of goo and the grinches that stole Christmas, that likeable elephant has always been my favorite.

Why? Because he seemed so, well...human. He had his doubts and fears. He was put upon by friends and teased by enemies. He was quite happy to go through life unbothered and undisturbed.

That was until one day he heard a very small "Help" coming from a dandelion, and he discovered a parallel world, smaller but none-the-less as important, as his own. At that point, he also discovered the hero inside himself.

Sometimes it IS the small things that make us think.

Let me give you an example. On a recent trip to Hong Kong, stuck in my room with violent monsoon storms raging around me, I occasionally looked out the window at the dark foreboding sky and the sheets of water literally dancing down the street. And there, perched precariously on my ledge was an egg, a pigeon's egg. An ill-advised place for a nest no-doubt—a mistake I would hope not to make were I a pigeon. But, my heart still went out to that little egg as, like Buster Keaton on roller skates, it would dash for the edge then roll back at the last possible moment. The poor mother would come back often to frantically help it. And there was nothing I could do, since my window wouldn't open. Helplessness is not a good feeling.

The last time I went to check on it, the egg was gone.

Later, my friend picked me up and told me of the terrible destruction on Hong Kong Island. Mudslides had killed several people, and floods threatened the homes of many others. We were both silent...there was no other place in the world, no other moment in time than where I was right then.

With storms raging all around us, the events that happen right before our eyes somehow seem so much more real.

It's that way with us. Until something slaps us in the face, we don't really believe it's there. It's some vague, make-believe thing. Are there really only a thousand giant otters left in the world? Are people really being killed in Bosnia? It's so far away from the streets we walk every day. Few of us take to heart the words of the writer who said: "I may never see a mountain gorilla, but I take great joy in knowing that they exist."

But, this is where we can learn our lesson from Horton. Remember the elephant who is "faithful one hundred percent."

We could take this time of year to look past our own limited field of vision and be faithful to something—a charity for hunger, disease or endangered species, perhaps. Give to it, watch it grow, learn about it...occasionally go to the window and see if it's alright.

Our own personal dandelion.

You might not hear that still small voice saying "Help" or even "Thank you." You may never hear it...but then again, you just might.

Just something to think about. Happy Holidays.

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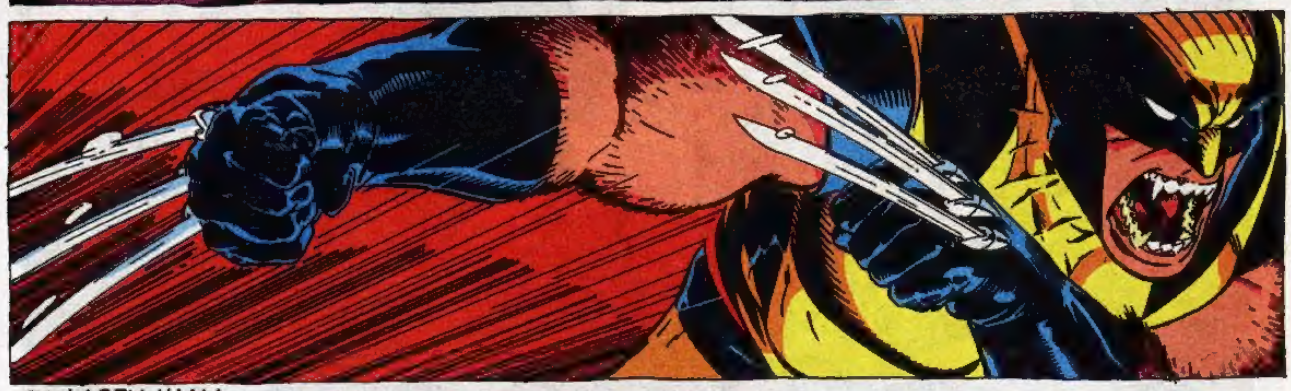
ZOUNDS O' SILENCE!



BY LARRY HAMA,

AND MICHAEL GOLDEN.

SEASONS
GREETINGS
MARVEL COMICS
SNIKT

MERR
RIST
DAVE
COCKRUM

-- THE NEW WARRIORS IN PRESENT TENSE

A STORY OF HOPE AND FRIENDSHIP, BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

FABIAN NICIEZA
WRITER

DARICK ROBERTSON
PENCILER

LARRY MAHLSTEDT
INKER

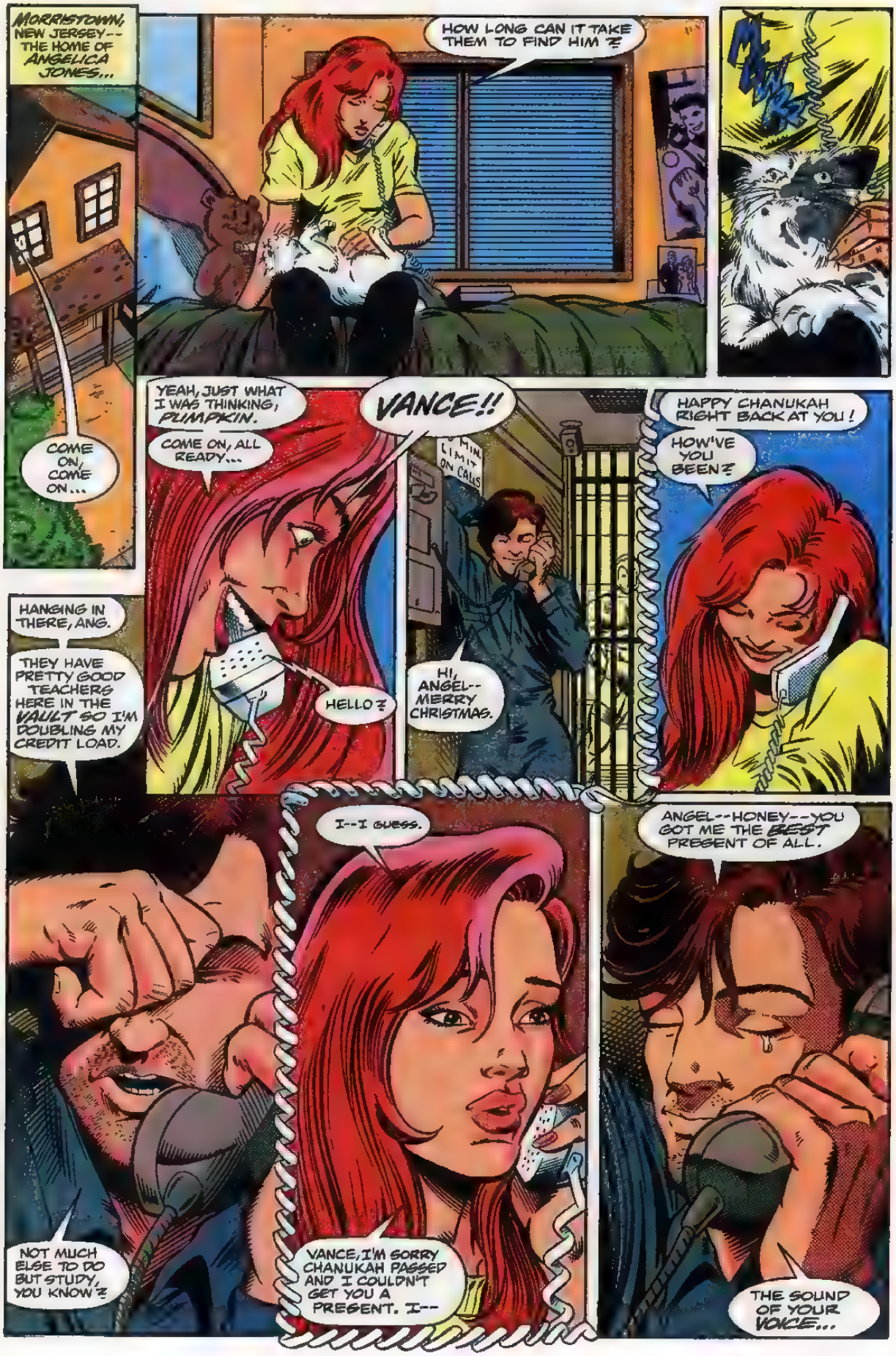
JOE ROSAS
COLORIST

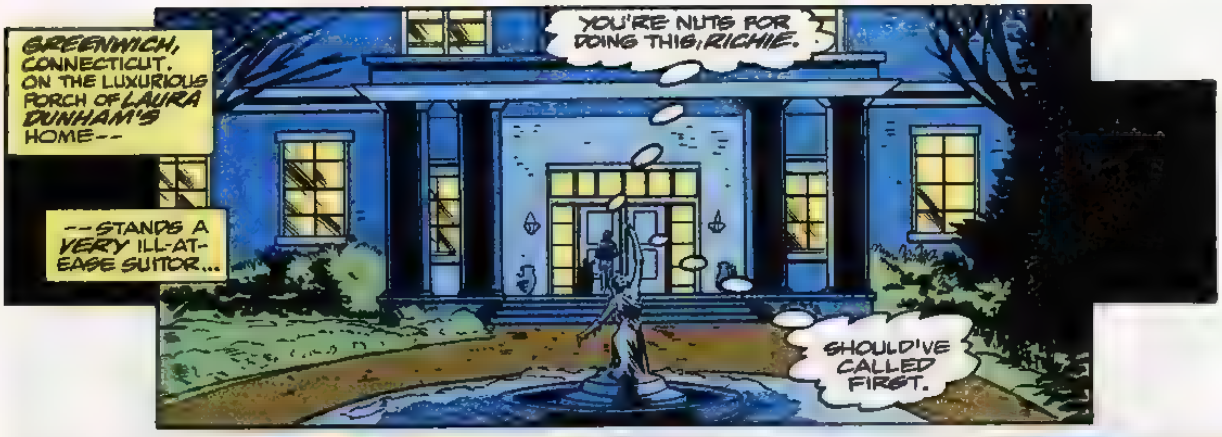
BRAD K. JOHNSON
LETTERER

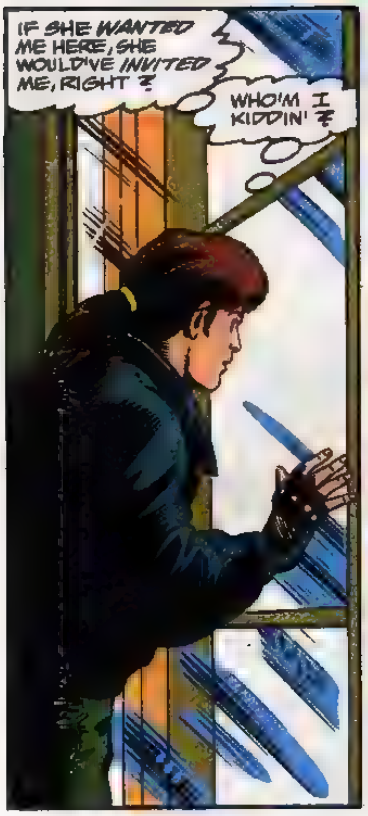
GEEI
DON'T TRY RUNNING AWAY--
KRAK
--FROM SOMEONE WHO CAN MELT IN AND OUT OF SHADOWS.
SIR--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
FINE--THANKS--
THEY WERE STEALING FROM A CHARITY WORKER?
WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT--HE'S GIVING THAT MONEY TO THE NEEDY.
MAYBE THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE NEEDIER?
THIS TIME OF YEAR TENDS TO BRING THAT OUT IN PEOPLE.
WHAT'S IT LIKE, SILHOUETTE?
TO NOT HAVE--TO WANT--TO NEED--
--ESPECIALLY DURING THE HOLIDAYS?
DWAYNE, IF YOU'VE NEVER WANTED FOR ANYTHING--
--HOW CAN I EXPLAIN NEEDING FOR EVERYTHING?

"JUST BE THANKFUL THAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--
"--AND THAT YOU TRY AS HARD AS YOU DO TO HELP OTHERS AFFORD THAT LUXURY..."
PERFECT.
SHE'LL REALLY LOVE THIS.
CHRISTMAS MUST BUY! BUY!
ELVIIIIIIN!!
FREE X MAS GEAR WITH ANY $1000.00 PURCHASE
YO, EL, HOMEY--CHECK OUT THE MERCANTILE GOODS I HAVE PURCHASED WITH PARENTAL PLASTIC!
ROB--QUITE A HAUL, LITTLE GUY.
I LOOOVE DOING ALL MY SHOPPING ON CHRISTMAS EVE!
MONDO-PANDEMONIUM!
I WENT UP TO HANLEY'S UNIVERSE--CHECK THIS OUT--
HEY, I CAN TALK!
--GOT IT FOR MY DAD--
VENOM
JUST PRESS MY BUTTONS AND HEAR FOR YOURSELF
I WANT TO EAT YOUR BRAINS!
I WANT TO EAT YOU BRAIN!

I'M SURE HE'LL LOVE IT.
FOR SURE.
WHATCHOU GET GRANDMA MOSES?
SHE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE FRANCE.
THIS IS AS CLOSE AS SHE'LL GET, I GUESS.
COOL. WHAT ELSE?
Uhm...THAT'S IT...
YOU CHEAPSKATE!!
ONE GIFT FOR THE ELDERLY ANGEL WHO HAS RAISED YOU TO SUCH STRAPPING PROPORTIONS?
UHM...ONE GIFT IS ALL WE EVER EXCHANGE, ROB.
RANGERS
IT'S ALL WE'VE EVER BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD.
SHOW YOU LOVE BUY MO
EMPORIUM
UHM... ELVIN, MAN--
--I'M SORRY-- I--
IT'S JAKE, SQUIRT.
IT'S CHRIS
LET'S HAUL YOUR BONY BUTT AND BOOTY OVER TO THE CRASH-PAD--
--WE'RE STILL MEETING EVERYONE FOR A LATE DINNER, RIGHT?


MORRISTOWN, NEW JERSEY--THE HOME OF ANGELICA JONES...
COME ON, COME ON...
HOW LONG CAN IT TAKE THEM TO FIND HIM?
MEOWR
VANCE!!
YEAH, JUST WHAT I WAS THINKING, PUMPKIN.
COME ON, ALL READY...
HELLO?
HI, ANGEL--MERRY CHRISTMAS.
HAPPY CHANUKAH RIGHT BACK AT YOU!
HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
HANGING IN THERE, ANG.
THEY HAVE PRETTY GOOD TEACHERS HERE IN THE VAULT SO I'M DOUBLING MY CREDIT LOAD.
NOT MUCH ELSE TO DO BUT STUDY, YOU KNOW?
I--I GUESS.
VANCE, I'M SORRY CHANUKAH PASSED AND I COULDN'T GET YOU A PRESENT. I--
ANGEL--HONEY--YOU GOT ME THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL.
THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE...


GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT, ON THE LUXURIOUS PORCH OF LAURA DUNHAM'S HOME--
--STANDS A VERY ILL-AT-EASE SUITOR...
YOU'RE NUTS FOR DOING THIS, RICHIE.
SHOULD'VE CALLED FIRST.


IF SHE WANTED ME HERE, SHE WOULD'VE INVITED ME, RIGHT?
WHO'M I KIDDIN'?

LOOK AT 'EM!
I KNEW I WOULDN'T FIT INTO HER WORLD.

SHOULD'VE CALLED FIRST.

YOU CAN GO TOE-TO-TOE WITH TERRAX, BUT NOT FACE YOUR GIRLFRIEND AT HER OWN HOUSE? C'MON!!
I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYTHING INTIMIDATE ME!
BLING
DOONG
EXCEPT MAYBE A SNOOTY DOORBELL...

UHM-- HI LAURA.
RICH--WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE--I MEAN--I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU!
UHM... I WAS KINDA IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD--
--THOUGHT I'D POP BY AND SEE YOU...
YOU'RE SO SWEET--I'M SORRY FOR HOW I REACTED--
--I WAS JUST EXPECTING MY CHEEK-CRUNCHING AUNT ELIZABETH!
YOU WANNA COME IN AND MEET EVERYONE?
UHM... CAN I PASS ON THAT ONE?
YOU--UHM--MIND HANGIN' ON THE PORCH?
SURE.
THANKS. COLD OUT.
WHERE'S YOUR CAR?
OH--UHM--PARKED AROUND THE CORNER.
LISTEN--I'M SORRY FOR BUGGIN' YOU ON CHRISTMAS EVE--
--BUT I JUST WANTED TO GIVE YOU...

...THIS.
OH, RICH-- YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE--
UHM--I WRAPPED IT MYSELF--PRETTY BAD, HUH?
NO, IT'S WONDERFUL.
RICH--IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
IT'S REAL CUBIC ZIRCONIA.
I KNOW--I LOVE IT!
BUT I'M AFRAID I DON'T HAVE YOUR PRESENT.
OH--THAT'S COOL--WE NEVER SAID WE'D EXCHANGE PRESENTS OR NOTHIN'--
I SAID I DIDN'T HAVE YOUR PRESENT, NOT THAT YOU WEREN'T GETTING ONE.
THIS WEEKEND. SKIING IN VERMONT.
MY PARENTS' TIME-SHARE. THE ONE WITH THE FIREPLACE.
JUST YOU...
...AND ME...

MANHATTAN, THE APARTMENT OF NAMORITA PRENTISS.
SHE IS A COLLEGE STUDENT, A BUSINESS-WOMAN, THE CURRENT LEADER OF THE NEW WARRIORS--
--AND A HYBRID POWERHOUSE MIX OF ATLANTEAN AND HUMAN GENETIC TRAITS.
FOR ALL OF THIS THOUGH, SHE IS STILL FEELING EMPTY WHEN IT COMES TO UNDERSTANDING THIS TIME OF THE YEAR.
CHRISTMAS IS AS ALIEN TO HER HUMAN HALF AS THE FESTIVAL OF J'ASHYE'DFAH IS TO HER ATLANTEAN SIDE.
FOR TOO LONG, SHE HAS WALKED THE FINE LINE BETWEEN HAVING TWO HERITAGES AND BELONGING TO NONE.
IF IT BOTHERS HER, SHE DOESN'T SHOW IT.
NOT EVEN TO THE BEST FRIENDS SHE HAS IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.
THE ONES SHE FEELS A STRONG NEED TO BE WITH DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME OF THE YEAR.

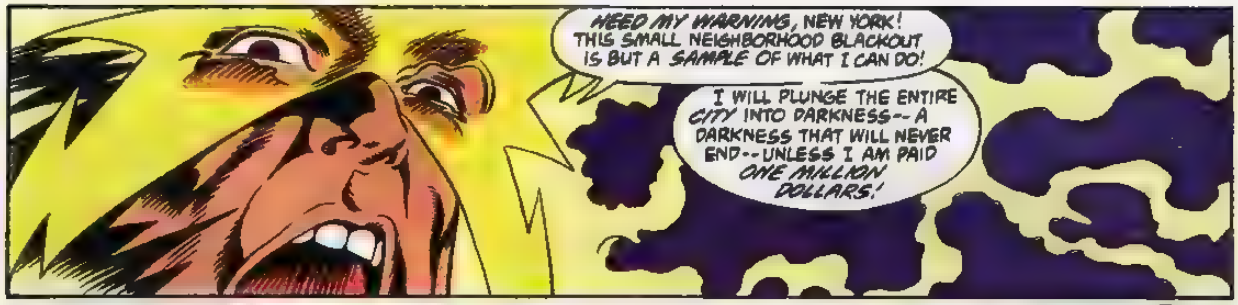
GREAT EGG-NOG, ROBBIE.
QUITE A KICK--YOU SPIKE THIS, TOOTHPICK?
RICH--!
UHM...YOU DIDN'T, ROB, DID YOU?
HEY, LOOK WHO'S FINALLY HERE!
NITA, QUICK, HAVE SOME EGGNOG.
DEFINITELY SPIKED.
NOW THAT WE'RE ALL HERE--
--I CAN FINALLY GIVE YOU YOUR PRESENTS!
I THOUGHT WE'D AGREED NOT TO EXCHANGE GIFTS!
I DIDN'T GET ANY OF YOU ANYTHING...
NOT TO WORRY--MY PRESENT'S--WELL, DIFFERENT--
--THE ONLY GIFT I COULD GIVE TO ALL OF YOU THAT WOULD MEAN ANYTHING.
I WANT TO GIVE YOU MY THANKS.
FOR SAVING MY BUTT TIME AND AGAIN.
FOR HELPING TO MAKE THIS WORLD A LITTLE BIT OF A BETTER PLACE.
AND MOST OF ALL, FOR BEING THE BEST FRIENDS I'VE EVER HAD.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS, GANG!
CORNY LITTLE GEEK, ISN'T HE?
THE BEST GIFT WE COULD GIVE--OR RECEIVE--
TO FAMILY.
TO FRIENDSHIP.
TO HOPE.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE NEW WARRIORS!

NAGE

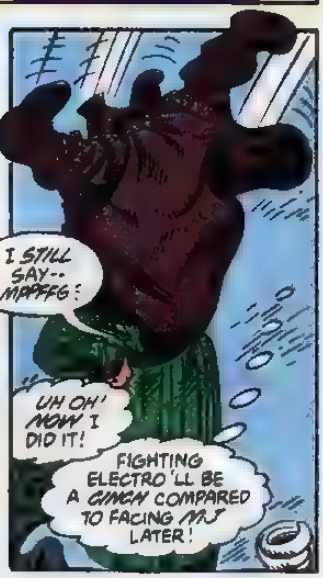
I PROMISED TO MEET MJ IN TIME TO SEE THEM LIGHT UP THE ROCKEFELLER CENTER CHRISTMAS TREE!
I HOPE SHE DIDN'T GET THERE FIRST
SHE HATES IT WHEN I'M LATE!
UH OH! THERE SHE IS!
LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE FOR ONE LITTLE WEB-SLINGER!
HI, HONEY! HOPE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN WAITING LONG!
LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY--
IT'S LUCKY MY WATCH HAS A ONE-YEAR BATTERY!
Stan Lee PRESENTS:
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
THE X-MAS BIG BLACKOUT!
RICHARD HOWELL plot
STAN LEE script
STEVE LIGHTLE & AL MILGROM art
JOHN COSTANZA letters
RENEE BITTERSWEET colors
special thanks to: JIM SALICRUP
I SUPPOSE YOU WERE BUSY SAVING THE WORLD SOMEWHERE!
ACTUALLY, A COP STOPPED ME FOR JAY-SWINGING!
LOOK! THEY'RE GETTING READY TO LIGHT UP THE TREE!
IF I WANTED A STAND-UP COMIC, I'D HAVE MARRIED ONE!

A SUDDEN HUSH FALLS OVER THE CROWD AS IT WAITS FOR AMERICA'S MOST FAMOUS CHRISTMAS TREE TO BURST INTO A GLORIOUS BLAZE OF LIGHT...
SEE THAT STAR ATOP THE TREE?
IT'S THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT!
AT LAST, THE MAGIC MOMENT ARRIVES!
IT'S LIT!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO GLORIOUS!
BUT, SECONDS LATER--DISASTER!
WHAT HAPPENED!
EVERYTHING'S GONE DARK!
ALL THE LIGHTS ARE OUT! THE TREE--THE BUILDINGS--THE STREET LAMPS!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A REASON!
MAYBE IT'S A SHORT CIRCUIT!
IMPOSSIBLE! ALL THIS WIRING'S BEEN TESTED BY EXPERTS!
THEN WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED IT?
A BLINDING SPARK ILLUMES A NEARBY ROOFTOP!
THE CITY IS ABOUT TO LEARN THE ANSWER!
LOOK! UP THERE! IT'S ELECTRO, MASTER OF ALL ELECTRICITY!
I THOUGHT HE WAS ONLY A LEGEND!
NO! HE REALLY EXISTS! AND HE'S HERE!

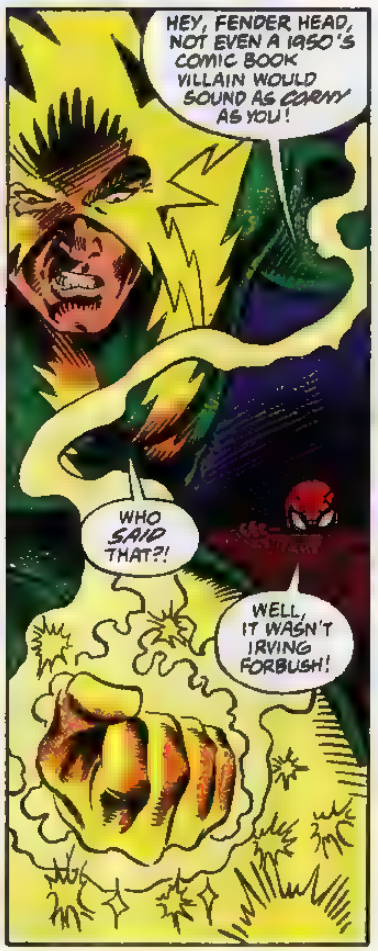

HEED MY WARNING, NEW YORK! THIS SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD BLACKOUT IS BUT A SAMPLE OF WHAT I CAN DO!
I WILL PLUNGE THE ENTIRE CITY INTO DARKNESS--A DARKNESS THAT WILL NEVER END--UNLESS I AM PAID ONE MILLION DOLLARS!

THERE WILL BE NO HOLIDAY, NO JOY, NOTHING UNLESS YOU OBEY MY DEMAND!
WOTTA KILLJOY! HE AND THE GRINCH WOULD MAKE A GREAT TEAM!
PETER WAIT!
HANG LOOSE, HONEY! THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE TOO LONG!

PETER Q. PARKER, COME BACK HERE! YOU'VE GOT TO LEAVE SOMETHING FOR THE POLICE TO DO!
HEYYYY, THEY EARN THEIR PAY! BUT SUPER-VILLAINS ARE MY DEPARTMENT!


I STILL SAY--:MPFFG:
UH OH! NOW I DID IT!
FIGHTING ELECTRO 'LL BE A GINCH COMPARED TO FACING MJ LATER!

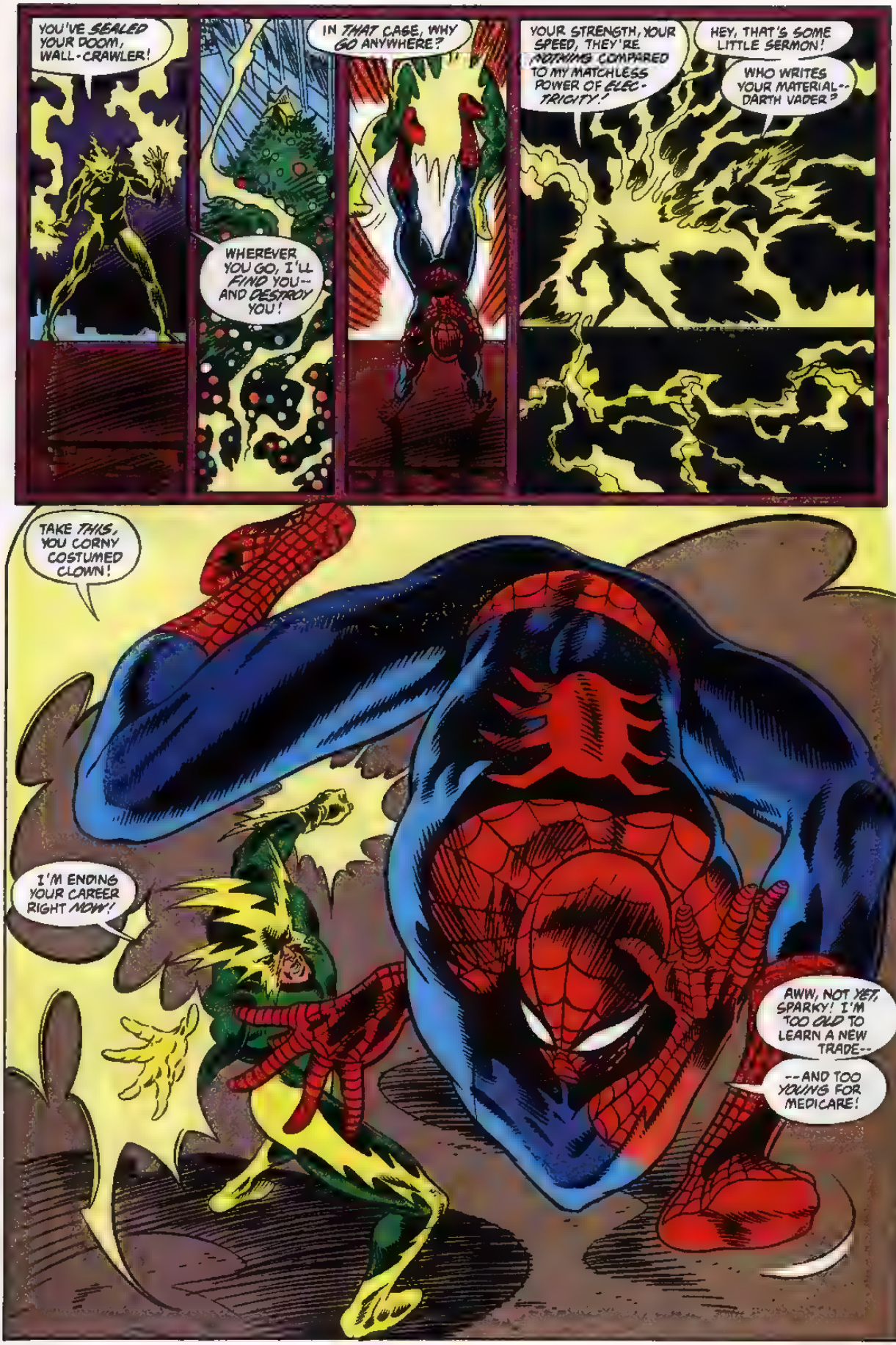
JUST IN CASE ANYONE THINKS I'M BLUFFING--
I'LL GIVE YOU ANOTHER TASTE OF ELECTRO'S MATCHLESS POWER!


HEY, FENDER HEAD, NOT EVEN A 1950'S COMIC BOOK VILLAIN WOULD SOUND AS CORNY AS YOU!
WHO SAID THAT?!
WELL, IT WASN'T IRVING FORBUSH!

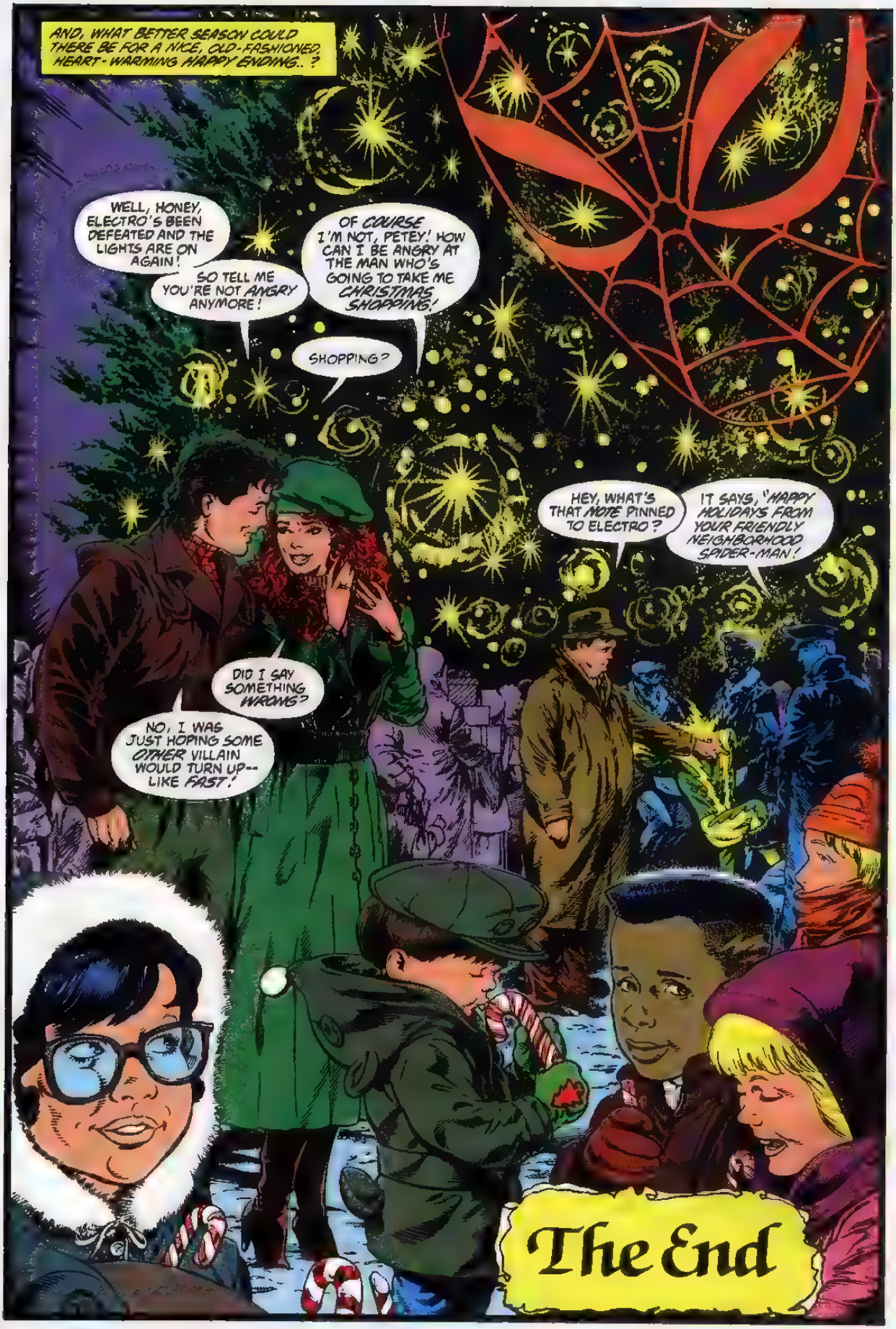
SPIDER-MAN!
I'M GLAD YOU REMEMBERED THE HYPHEN! MOST PEOPLE LEAVE IT OUT!
Y'KNOW, SOMETHING'S ALWAYS PUZZLED ME--
ARE YOU AC OR DC?

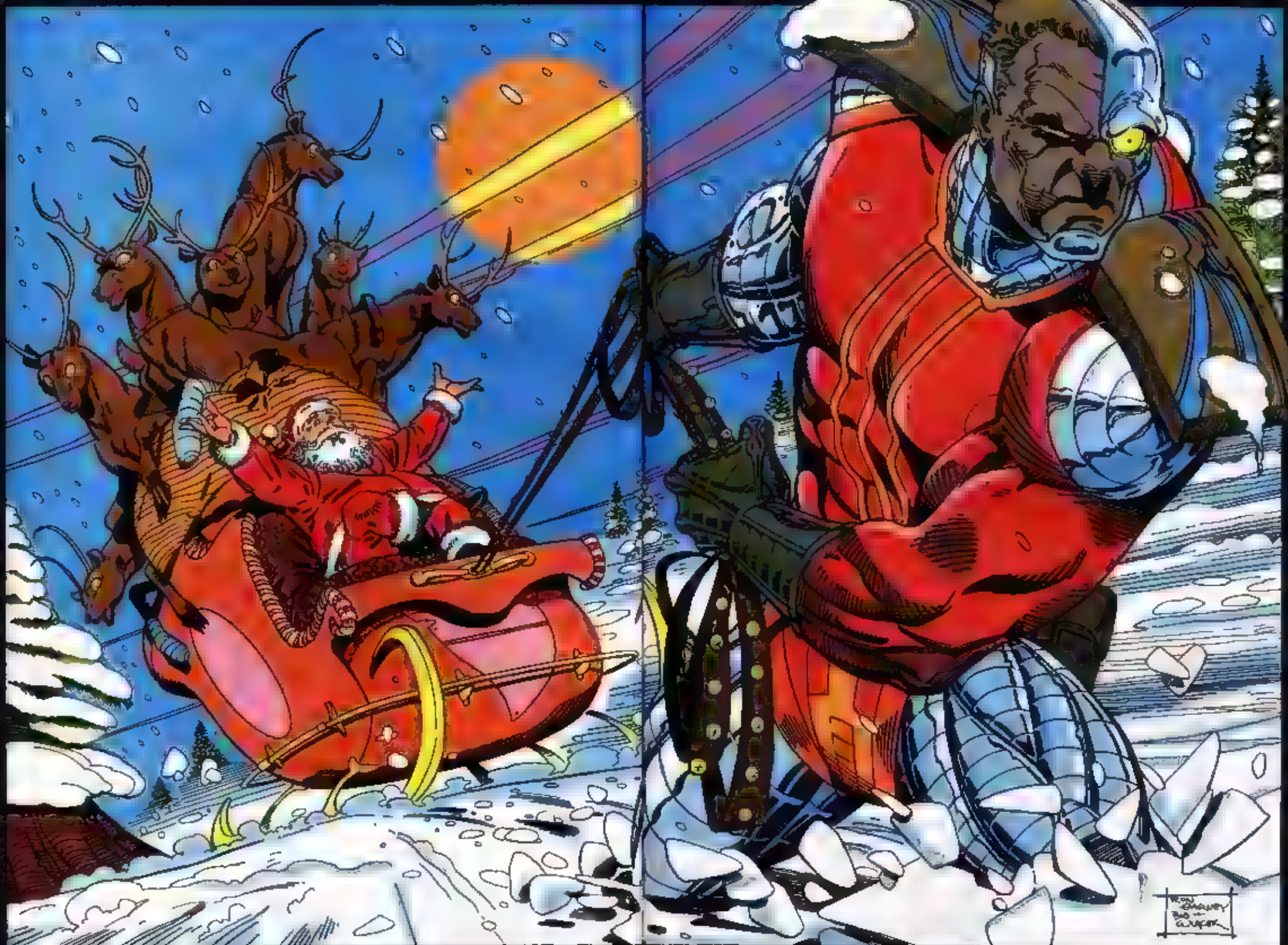
WOW! MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED!
HE ELECTRO-BLASTED THE WHOLE CORNER OF THE BUILDING!
RUN, YOU SNIVELING FOOL!
AT LAST YOU SEE YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ELECTRO!
WHO'S RUNNING?
I JUST WANNA GET A DICTIONARY--
--SO I CAN SEE WHAT SNIVEL MEANS!
WHEN YOU RETURN, YOU'LL LEARN WHAT POWER MEANS!
THE POWER OF ELECTRO!
AND, SPEAKING OF OUR FAVORITE WEBHEAD...
HE'S GONE! WITH ALL HIS PHONY BRAGGADOCIO HE WAS MERELY PLAYING TO THE CROWD!
WELL, I'VE GIVEN HIM ENOUGH TIME TO HYPE HIMSELF UP WITH AN OVERDOSE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE!
SO I GUESS THE NEXT MOVE IS UP TO ME!
LOOK AT THEM DOWN THERE! FEARFUL AND HELPLESS--
--JUST LIKE THE VANQUISHED WEB-SWINGER!
SHEEESH! WHY CAN'T VILLAINS JUST GIVE UP?
IT WOULD SAVE SO MUCH TIME AND TROUBLE!

MY PATIENCE GROWS SHORT!
IF THE MONEY ISN'T PAID ME SOON--
I'LL GIVE THEM A DEMONSTRATION OF POWER SUCH AS THEY HAVE NEVER KNOWN!
WITH THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY OF BUT ONE FINGER--
--I CAN BRING ALL OF NEW YORK TO ITS KNEES!
YOU DON'T NEED ELECTRICAL ENERGY!
JUST KEEP TALKING-- YOU'LL BORE 'EM TO DEATH!
YOU!
HERE, MAYBE THIS'LL GIVE YOU SOME HOLIDAY SPIRIT!
YOU EXPECT TO STOP ME WITH TREE ORNA-MENTS?!!
HAD NO CHOICE--
THEY WERE ALL OUT OF GREETINGS CARDS!
NOW I'VE DONE IT! HE'S REALLY MAD!


YOU'VE SEALED YOUR DOOM, WALL-CRAWLER!
IN THAT CASE, WHY GO ANYWHERE?
WHEREVER YOU GO, I'LL FIND YOU-- AND DESTROY YOU!
YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR SPEED, THEY'RE NOTHING COMPARED TO MY MATCHLESS POWER OF ELECTRICITY!
HEY, THAT'S SOME LITTLE SERMON!
WHO WRITES YOUR MATERIAL-- DARTH VADER?
TAKE THIS, YOU CORNY COSTUMED CLOWN!
I'M ENDING YOUR CAREER RIGHT NOW!
AWW, NOT YET, SPARKY! I'M TOO OLD TO LEARN A NEW TRADE--
--AND TOO YOUNG FOR MEDICARE!

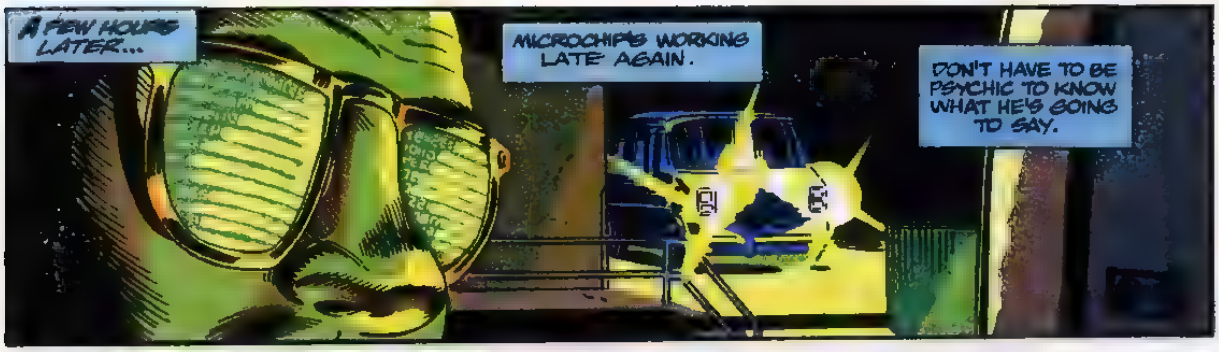
THIS IS THE END!
I'M HARNESSING ALL MY ENERGY INTO ONE SENSES-SHATTERING THRUST!
ME, I'M MORE LOW-KEY! I'LL JUST THWIPP A LITTLE STRAND OF WEBBING!
"YOU FOOL! WHAT CAN YOUR PUNY WEBBING DO AGAINST A LIVING DYNAMO OF DEATH?"
THE STAR! I WEBBED IT!
MY TIMING'S GOTTA BE PERFECT!
"WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND OUT, WON'T WE?"
--JUST AS HE'S UN-LEASHING HIS GREATEST POWER BOLT!
ZZPPST
I WON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE!
NOOO!
I DID IT!
THE GIANT STAR CAUGHT HIS SURGE OF POWER AND REFLECTED IT BACK TO HIM!
HE WAS ZAPPED BY HIS OWN SUPER VOLTAGE!
NOT EVEN ELECTRO COULD HANDLE SUCH A BLAST!
WHEN HE WAKES UP, THE LAW WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM!
AS FOR YOU, LITTLE STAR SWEETIE, LET'S PUT YOU BACK WHERE YOU BELONG!


AND, WHAT BETTER SEASON COULD THERE BE FOR A NICE, OLD-FASHIONED, HEART-WARMING HAPPY ENDING..?
WELL, HONEY, ELECTRO'S BEEN DEFEATED AND THE LIGHTS ARE ON AGAIN!
SO TELL ME YOU'RE NOT ANGRY ANYMORE!
OF COURSE I'M NOT, PETEY! HOW CAN I BE ANGRY AT THE MAN WHO'S GOING TO TAKE ME CHRISTMAS SHOPPING!
SHOPPING?
HEY, WHAT'S THAT NOTE PINNED TO ELECTRO?
IT SAYS, "HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN!"
DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
NO, I WAS JUST HOPING SOME OTHER VILLAIN WOULD TURN UP--LIKE FAST!
The End



In the Spirit of the Season
CARL POTTS · RIK LEVINS · AL MILGROM
WRITER PENCILER INKER
BRAD JOYCE · PATY COCKRUM · WITTERSTAETTER
LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR
TWO DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS.
Bank
HERE I AM -- PREPARING FOR THE HOLIDAY BY CHASING DOWN DRUG DEALERS.
MY GIFT TO THE CITY'S POPULATION.
THAK-A-THAK
A THAK A
IT'S THE PUNISHER: STEP ON IT!
THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS.
STREETS ARE FULL OF SHOPPERS. SOMEONE'S GOING TO GET HIT.

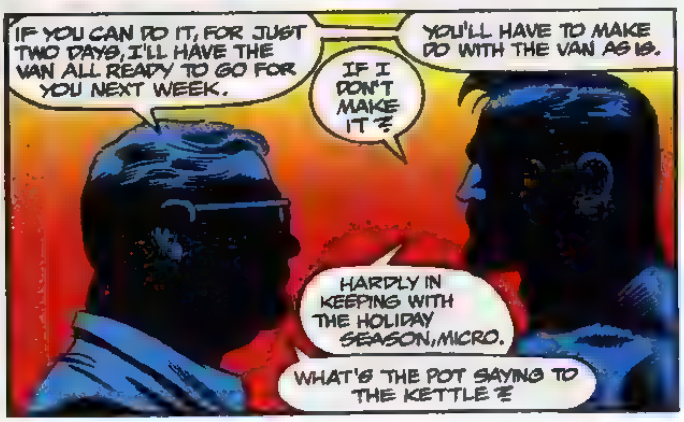
#%*!! MISSED THE LIGHT.
CUT OFF BY CROSS TRAFFIC. CAN'T RUN THE LIGHT.
A-1 TAXI
SCREECH
WHAT'S THIS ?
HEARD ABOUT THIS RASH OF CHARITY SANTA HEISTS.
WHOOOSH
LOOK OUT!
WHA--?!
STOP! THAT'S FOR THE HOMELESS!
CAN'T CHASE HIM NOW. STAY ON THE BIGGER GAME.
FINALLY.
OH HELL


A FEW HOURS LATER...
MICROCHIP'S WORKING LATE AGAIN.
DON'T HAVE TO BE PSYCHIC TO KNOW WHAT HE'S GOING TO SAY.

WHAT A MESS! CHRISTMAS AROUND THE CORNER AND YOU, ONCE ALMOST A PRIEST, GO AROUND GETTING INTO FIREFIGHTS...
...AND TRASHING A LOT OF MY HARD WORK TO BOOT! JUST LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO THE VAN!
I JUST RID THE WORLD OF A HOMICIDAL MANIAC AND A MAJOR DRUG DEALER. WORTH A FEW DENTS IN THE VAN?
HMMMMM...

GOT A BIG STAKEOUT NEXT WEEK. CAN YOU CUSTOMIZE THE VAN'S ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS BY THEN?
I SUPPOSE THAT YOU WANT THE WHOLE VAN REPAIRED, TOO?
FRANK, I'LL BET THAT YOU CAN'T GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT 48 HOURS WITHOUT RESORTING TO LETHAL MEANS.

NO SHOOTING, STABBING, OR HITTING. NO OFFENSE AT ALL.
WHY WOULD I EVEN TAKE SUCH A STUPID BET?


IF YOU CAN DO IT, FOR JUST TWO DAYS, I'LL HAVE THE VAN ALL READY TO GO FOR YOU NEXT WEEK.
YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH THE VAN AS IS.
IF I DON'T MAKE IT?
HARDLY IN KEEPING WITH THE HOLIDAY SEASON, MICRO.
WHAT'S THE POT SAYING TO THE KETTLE?

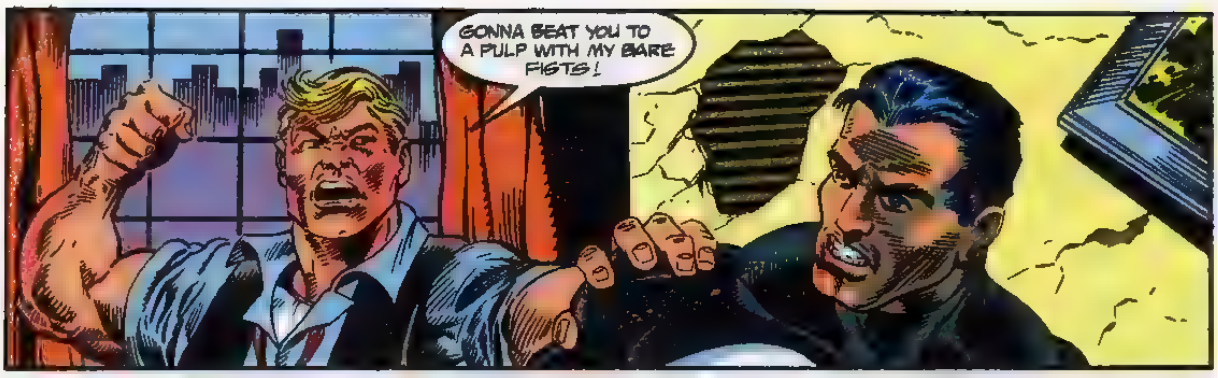
NEXT DAY...
BEEN AT THIS FOR SEVEN HOURS.
I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE AREA THE THIEVES HAVE BEEN HITTING.
HOLD ON.
VOOOSH
LUCKY I MANAGED TO TALK MICRO INTO AT LEAST PUTTING SOME WELDING EQUIPMENT INTO THE VAN.
NO BICYCLES
WOAH!!
IT'D TAKE A MAIN BATTLE TANK TO BREAK THE WELD ON THAT CHAIN AND POT.
WHY ARE YOU STEALING FROM CHARITIES?
WHAM
UMPH
@#%&!! YOU, MAN!
YOU DON'T SCARE ME, SAN...
OH, GEEZ.
COUGH UP THE INFO AND YOU WALK IN ONE PIECE.
OKAY! ALL RIGHT!
A BAD DUDE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD BLACKMAILS LOCAL KIDS FOR THESE COLLECTION RUNS.

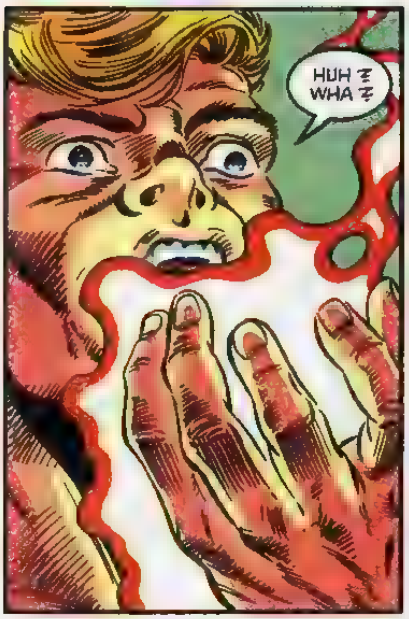
WHAT KIND OF BLACKMAIL?
IT'S MORE OF A THREAT. MY KID BROTHER REFUSED AND THE MAN BROKE HIS ARM. SAID IF I DIDN'T DO IT, HE'D TRASH MY WHOLE FAMILY.
EVERYONE IN THE 'HOOD'S TOO SCARED TO CALL THE COPS.
I WANT THIS MAN'S ADDRESS.
SURE! BUT WATCH OUT.
HE'S GOT A HUGE GUARD WHO'S ALWAYS PLANTED IN FRONT OF THE H.Q.
HIS BIG THING IS TO SUCKER PUNCH FOLKS IN THE CHEST.
HITS 'EM SO HARD THEY DROP LIKE A ROCK AND ARE RACKED IN PAIN AS THEY GASP FOR BREATH.
BELIEVE ME, IT AIN'T NO FUN.
LATER...
TOOK A FEW HOURS IN THE VAN TO PREPARE FOR THIS.
THANKS A LOT, MICRO.
HOLD UP, CLAUS. WHERE D'YA THINK YOU'RE GOIN'?
DELIVERING A PRESENT HERE, SON. YOU BEING A BAD BOY, DON'T EXPECT A VISIT FROM ME TOMORROW NIGHT.
IT'S BETTER TO GIVE THAN RECEIVE, YOU SORRY OLD BUM...
...AND I GOT YOUR PRESENT RIGHT HERE.

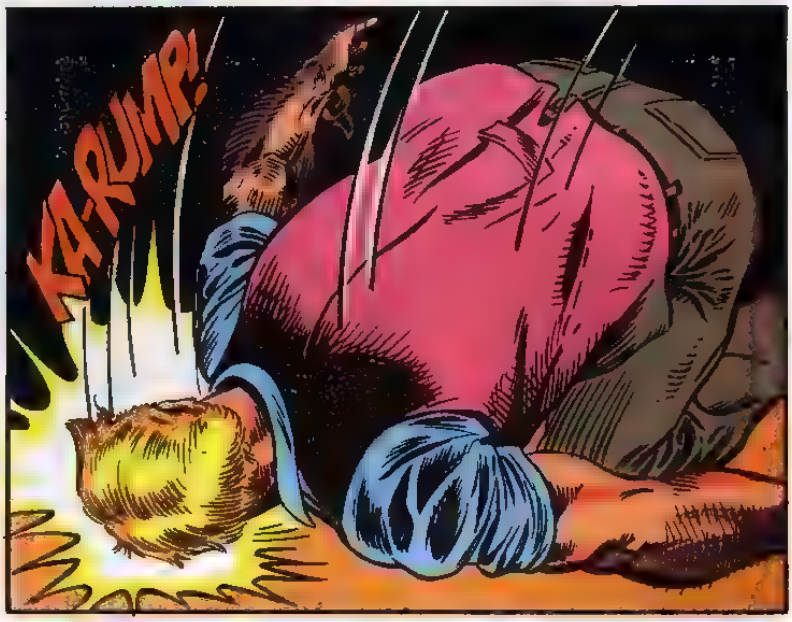
AH AHH ARGHHH!
CLANG
ALL THE WELDING PAID OFF.
JUST LIKE SANTA OR THE MAILMAN, NOTHING KEEPS ME FROM MY APPOINTED ROUNDS.
EVEN MICRO'S RIDICULOUS CONDITIONS.
Charrr...

HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM.
KA RASH
?!?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I HAD IN MIND.
ULP!
YOU'RE TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF AS OF NOW.
ALL CRIMINAL ACTIVITY WILL CEASE AND YOU'LL TURN YOURSELF IN AS A LITTLE CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR THE COPS.
YOU'RE @%*!! NUTS! YOU CAN BEAT THE @%!! OUT OF ME BUT I AIN'T NEVER GOING BACK TO PRISON!
I'D DIE FIRST!
I'M NOT GOING TO HIT YOU, SHOOT, STAB OR INITIATE VIOLENCE OF ANY KIND TOWARDS YOU.

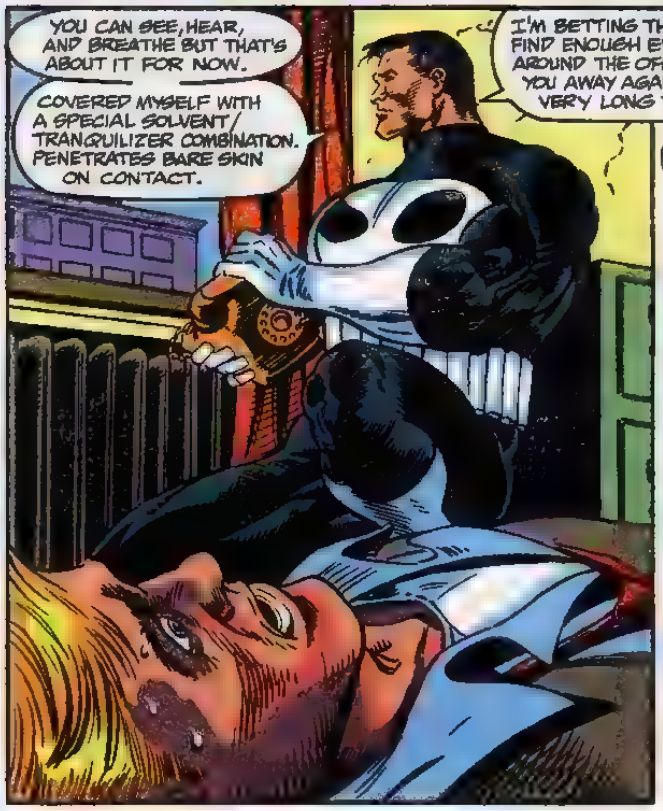
WHAT'S YOUR GAME?
NO GAME. SPECIAL HOLIDAY RULES. YOU CAN SEE I'M NOT CARRYING AND I WON'T EVEN STRIKE BACK IN DEFENSE.
12th PRECINCT, SGT. AMOS, HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
HERE. NOW START TALKING TO THE BOYS IN BLUE.
I'M NOT GOING BACK TO PRISON!
WHAT'S GOING ON?! HELLO?! HELLO?!
GEEZ... YOU REALLY MEAN IT, DON'T YOU?
ALRIGHT! HEY! HOLD STILL!
SAID I WOULDN'T STRIKE BACK...
...NOTHING ABOUT NOT DUCKING.
UNGH
WOOSH
THUNK
HA!!
HE'S RUNNING OUT OF LIFTABLE WEAPONS.


GONNA BEAT YOU TO A PULP WITH MY BARE FISTS!


HUH ?
WHA ?

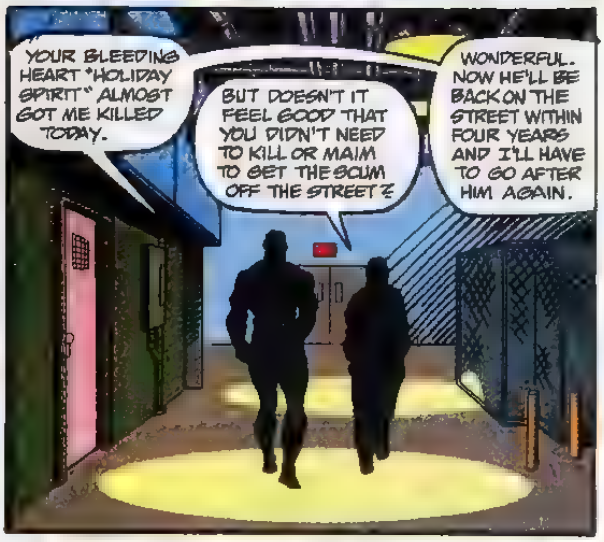

KA-RUMP!

WHEE-UP
WHEE-UP
WHEE-UP
COMPANY'S COMING. MUST'VE TRACED THE PHONE LINE. GOT ABOUT ANOTHER TWO MINUTES.

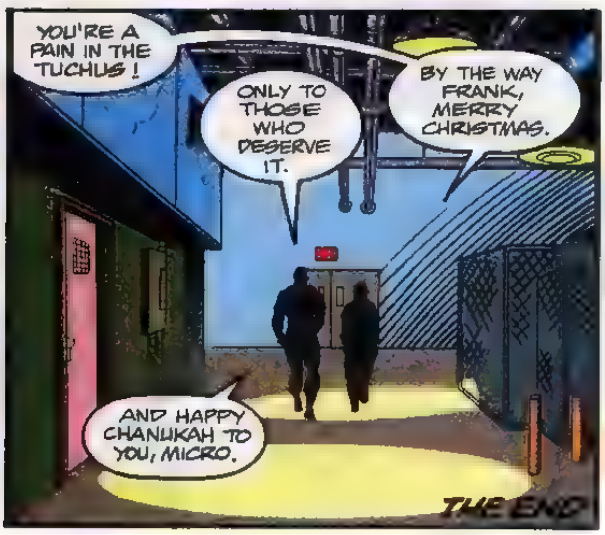

YOU CAN SEE, HEAR, AND BREATHE BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT FOR NOW.
COVERED MYSELF WITH A SPECIAL SOLVENT/ TRANQUILIZER COMBINATION. PENETRATES BARE SKIN ON CONTACT.
I'M BETTING THE COPS'LL FIND ENOUGH EVIDENCE AROUND THE OFFICE TO PUT YOU AWAY AGAIN--FOR A VERY LONG TIME--
--BACK IN PRISON WITH ALL YOUR OLD FRIENDS.
BEST MAKE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION NOT TO SLEEP WITH BOTH EYES CLOSED. HAPPY HOLIDAYS.

SHORTLY...
...AND THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY. I WIN THE BET.
YOU MAY HAVE KEPT TO THE LETTER OF THE BET, FRANK...
...BUT YOU VIOLATED THE SPIRIT BY INSTIGATING SITUATIONS WHERE PEOPLE HURT THEMSELVES IN REACTION TO YOUR PRESENCE!
NO WIGGLING OUT OF THIS ONE, MICRO. I WON FAIR AND SQUARE.

I'LL DO THE UPGRADES ON THE VAN BUT YOU REALLY DON'T DESERVE IT. I'M TOO MUCH OF AN OLD GENTLEMAN.
I'LL AGREE WITH HALF THAT LAST SENTENCE.
YOU'VE REALLY GOT TO LEARN TO GET BACK IN THE SPIRIT OF THE HOLIDAYS, FRANK.


YOUR BLEEDING HEART "HOLIDAY SPIRIT" ALMOST GOT ME KILLED TODAY.
BUT DOESN'T IT FEEL GOOD THAT YOU DIDN'T NEED TO KILL OR MAIM TO GET THE SCUM OFF THE STREET?
WONDERFUL. NOW HE'LL BE BACK ON THE STREET WITHIN FOUR YEARS AND I'LL HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM AGAIN.

MAYBE HE'LL REFORM--MAYBE HE'LL SEE THE LIGHT.
YEAH. MAYBE HE'LL JOIN MOTHER TERESA IN CALCUTTA.
PESSIMIST.
I'M A REALIST.


YOU'RE A PAIN IN THE TUCHUS!
ONLY TO THOSE WHO DESERVE IT.
BY THE WAY FRANK, MERRY CHRISTMAS.
AND HAPPY CHANUKAH TO YOU, MICRO.
THE END

...Ghosts Of Christmas Comics Past!

In last year's HOLIDAY SPECIAL, we covered classic holiday tales from the dawn of the Marvel Age in the early sixties up to the mid-1970s. In this installment, we spotlight yuletide tales from the mid-seventies up to the present.

We start off with a little offering entitled "Silent Night. . .Deadly Night! (Christmas Eve, 1974)" from MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #8. MTIO was the mag in which the ever-lovin' blue-eyed Thing teamed up with a different Marvel superstar every month. His co-star in that particular mini-epic. . .none other than the original Ghost Rider! The story started off when a mysterious star appeared over the tribe of Wyatt Wingfoot in Arizona. Ghost Rider stumbled upon three wise men on camelback, who were following the star. Over at the Baxter Building in New York, Reed Richards was monitoring the star, and felt someone should fly out and investigate. The Thing offered to go, so Reed could spend Christmas Eve with his family.

GR and Ben met up in Arizona, where they learned the whole thing was a plot set up by the Miracle Man. It seems MM had used his powers to cause a child to be born immaculately (that means without a mother or father, natch!) and was trying to mold the child into a modern-day Jesus Christ! If you think that plot sounds strange, you haven't lived till you've seen Ben and Ghost Rider go undercover as two of the Three Wise Men! This inspired weirdness came compliments of writer Steve Gerber, who in the seventies was known for his bizarre work on HOWARD THE DUCK and THE DEFENDERS.

Our next holiday tale is not a Christmas tale at all — rather, it's a New Year's Eve saga from DAREDEVIL #120, entitled "And a Hydra New Year." The story involved a bunch of HYDRA agents raiding a New Year's Eve party held by DD's friend, Foggy Nelson. DD's then-girlfriend, the Black Widow was in attendance as well. Nick Fury and his agents of SHIELD pulled a last-minute rescue, and Nick made a special offer to Foggy. The next issue box offered this promising teaser: "Foggy Nelson, Agent of SHIELD?" (Fortunately for all of us, Foggy wound up not joining SHIELD, preferring instead to remain as Matt Murdock's law partner.)

X-MEN #96 offered another Christmas tale, featuring "The All-New, All-Different X-Men," as the team was called then. (Scott Lodbell and Dave Cockrum did a prequel to this story in last year's MARVEL HOLIDAY SPECIAL!) Of course, these days, there is an almost completely new group of X-Men, so the former "new" X-Men could now be considered "the old new X-Men!" The story started with the X-Men out for an evening of merriment, starting at the ice skating rink at Rockefeller Center. Wolverine wandered off, commenting, "I got no use for Christmas." The creators of the original X-Men, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby made a cameo appearance, noting how different these X-Men were from the originals. Scott and Jean professed their love for one another. And then the Sentinels went and attacked and ruined everything!

The fight with the Sentinels began on the roof of Rockefeller Center, and finished in outer space! The story continued for two more issues, winding up in the classic X-MEN #100, which pitted the New X-Men against robot duplicates of the original X-Men.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #186 was a yuletide tale for coldblooded people, as it featured the war of the reptile men! It seems our old friend Stegron the Dinosaur Man had found a way to bring old dinosaur skeletons from a museum to life, and had sent a trio of dinos on a rampage in New York. Stegron was once the lab assistant of Dr.Curt Connors, and when Connors found out what Stegron was up to, he once again changed to the lethal Lizard, eager for revenge! Spidey had to stop this reptile parade and get Dr. Curt Connors home in time for Christmas!

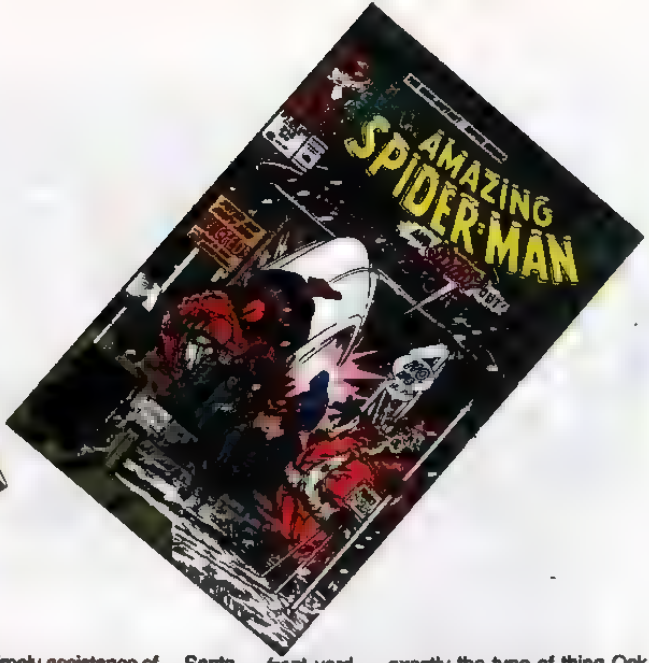
Spidey succeeded, natch. He changed the Lizard back into Curt Connors, Connors caused the dinosaurs to revert back into skeletons, and Stegron met the same fate as his dinosaur ancestors had millions of years before: he fell into icy water and was killed by the cold! Once all the excitement was over, Spidey peeked in as the Conners family celebrated Christmas. The heartwarming scene caused Spidey to reflect on the nature of Christmas: "Sharing, giving. . .that's what it's really all about, isn't it?" Spidey swung off into the night, shouting out "Merry Christmas, New York — you great big shiny apple you! And God bless us. . .everyone!"

X-MEN #143 contained a Christmas classic by the ultimate X-MEN team — Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and Terry Austin! The story was called "Demon," and any similarity to the movie ALIEN was purely intentional. The issue found then-X-Man Kitty Pryde alone in the X-Mansion on Christmas Eve, forced to fight a savage N'Garai demon all by her lonesome! This was Kitty's first real test in solo action, and she passed with flying colors. (Since Kitty will eventually grow up to look like Sigourney Weaver, this came as no big surprise!)

A second Daredevil Christmas tale appeared in issue #169 of ol' Horn-Head's mag. That story, by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson, had an insane Bullseye going around thinking everyone in the world looked like Daredevil. Since Bullseye wanted to kill Daredevil, he felt obligated to kill everyone he met! Daredevil had to blow off a Christmas Eve party held by Foggy Nelson in order to track down Bullseye. DD defeated Bullseye, and could have left the villain to die on the subway tracks; instead, DD pulled Bullseye off the tracks just in time, proving Frank Miller's claim that Daredevil is the most Christian of all super heroes. DD gave Bullseye the gift of life — what better theme for a Christmas story?

Yet another DD holiday story appeared in issue #229, again written by Miller. This time, DD was at a low point in his life: he'd lost his job, his apartment, his friends. He was living as a homeless man in New York. As if things weren't bad enough, DD was knifed by his old foe, Turk, who was dressed as Santa Claus! Things ended on a hopeful note, as DD was taken in by a kindly nun who turned out to be DD's own mother!

Turk wasn't the only villain to pass himself as Santa, though. The Rhino had the same idea in issue #378 of the INCREDIBLE HULK. In this humorous tale written by Peter David, a dejected and disgusted Rhino figured out an easy way to make some money during the holiday season: he walloped a street corner Santa and stole his uniform. He then went around disguised as Santa, collecting money for his favorite charity — himself! The Rhino's plan backfired, however, when he found himself called in to cover for a drunken department store Santa. At first, Rhino was thrilled to be working with kids, noting, "This is the first time I've ever been greeted with joy and



happiness. . .instead of screams!"

But inevitably, the Rhino's bad temper got the better of him — he's not very good with kids — and he went berserk, causing the Hulk to step in. The two got in a big fight, which went on until a little girl named Virginia stopped it by asking what Hulk was doing beating up Santa Claus! The story ended up with Hulk and Rhino teaming up to hand out presents to all the little boys and girls. Truly one of Marvel's holiday best!

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #314 had an equally memorable Yuletide saga, by David Michelinie and Todd McFarlane. In that issue, Peter Parker and Mary Jane were evicted from their apartment, just in time for the holidays. At that time, Pete and MJ were living in a building owned by Jonathan Caesar, who was an obsessed fan of MJ's. Even though Caesar was in prison, he was still able to get revenge on MJ, who spurned him. He wanted to make her life difficult. Aunt May offered Pete and MJ a place to stay, but Pete turned her down. This left Pete and MJ with nowhere to live.

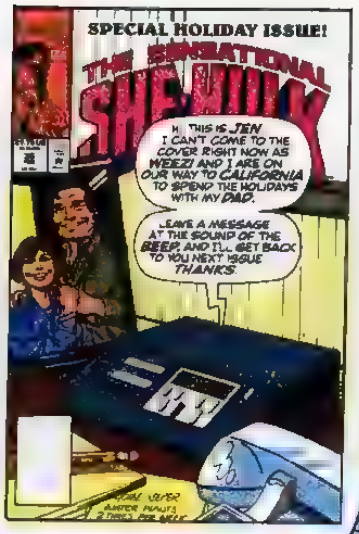
Meanwhile, a disgruntled employee of J.C. Herdling's department store tried to rob the store of its Christmas profits. Naturally, Spidey got involved. Spidey recovered the money, with the timely assistance of. . .Santa Claus! Pete and MJ decided to accept Aunt May's offer after all. It was while visiting the grave of his Uncle Ben that Peter reached his decision, noting that although he didn't want to be dependent on Aunt May, part of his being a responsible adult was knowing when to swallow your pride and accept the hospitality of those who love you.

Spider-Man has probably had more Christmas tales than just about any other hero. (When you have five monthly titles, that increases the odds a little bit!) Another tale of holiday havoc was found in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #173, by Spidey team supreme "Merry" Gerry Conway and "Our Pal" Sal Buscema. That story had a quiet Christmas Eve at Aunt May's house shattered by a visit by Dr. Octopus. Doc Ock, as you'll recall, had once lived as a boarder at Aunt May's house. (Heck, he almost married her once!) Ock considered May Parker to be the only person who knew him as the kind and decent person he once was.

Ock was hoping for a quiet visit with May Parker on Christmas Eve. But when Spidey saw a super-villain showing up on his aunt's doorstep, he naturally overreacted and attacked. This led to a big battle in Aunt May's front yard — exactly the type of thing Ock had hoped to avoid. Aunt May came out and stopped the fight, and Doc Ock departed, followed soon after by a shamed Spider-Man. Somehow, their own petty differences just didn't seem to matter in light of this joyous occasion. Even super-villains and super heroes can call a truce, one night a year.

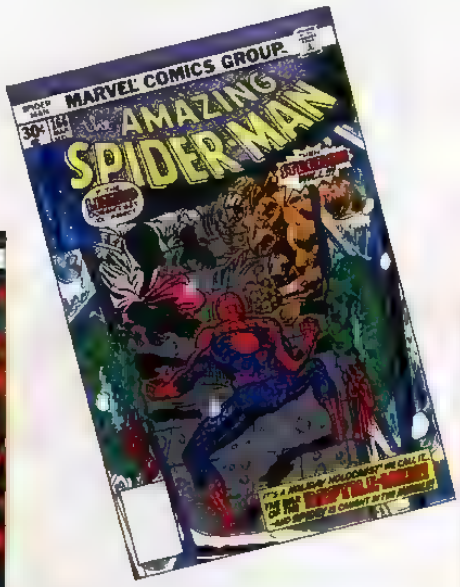
THE SENSATIONAL SHE-HULK #8 showed us what Santa Claus does the other 364 days of the year — he works as a private eye named Nick St.Christopher! Santa makes a great private eye — he sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows if you're bad or good — let's face it, there' no putting anything over on this guy! He's a regular Columbo!

Finally, we come to SHE-HULK #36, a holiday tale in which Jen's Dad had his greatest Christmas wish come true — he got to see his daughter transform from the She-Hulk back to human form for one day! This was caused by Nick St.Christopher, who had promised Jen a special gift back in issue #9. Jen waited until John Byrne came back on her book as writer/artist before making use of this magical gift.



This concludes our list of classic Marvel holiday tales. We hope you enjoyed this little sleigh-ride down our snow-covered memory-lane. That about wraps it up for another year. Hopefully we'll be back next year with another HOLIDAY SPECIAL, and we'll see you then. But for now, we'd like to wish you Happy Holidays from all of us here at Mighty Marvel!

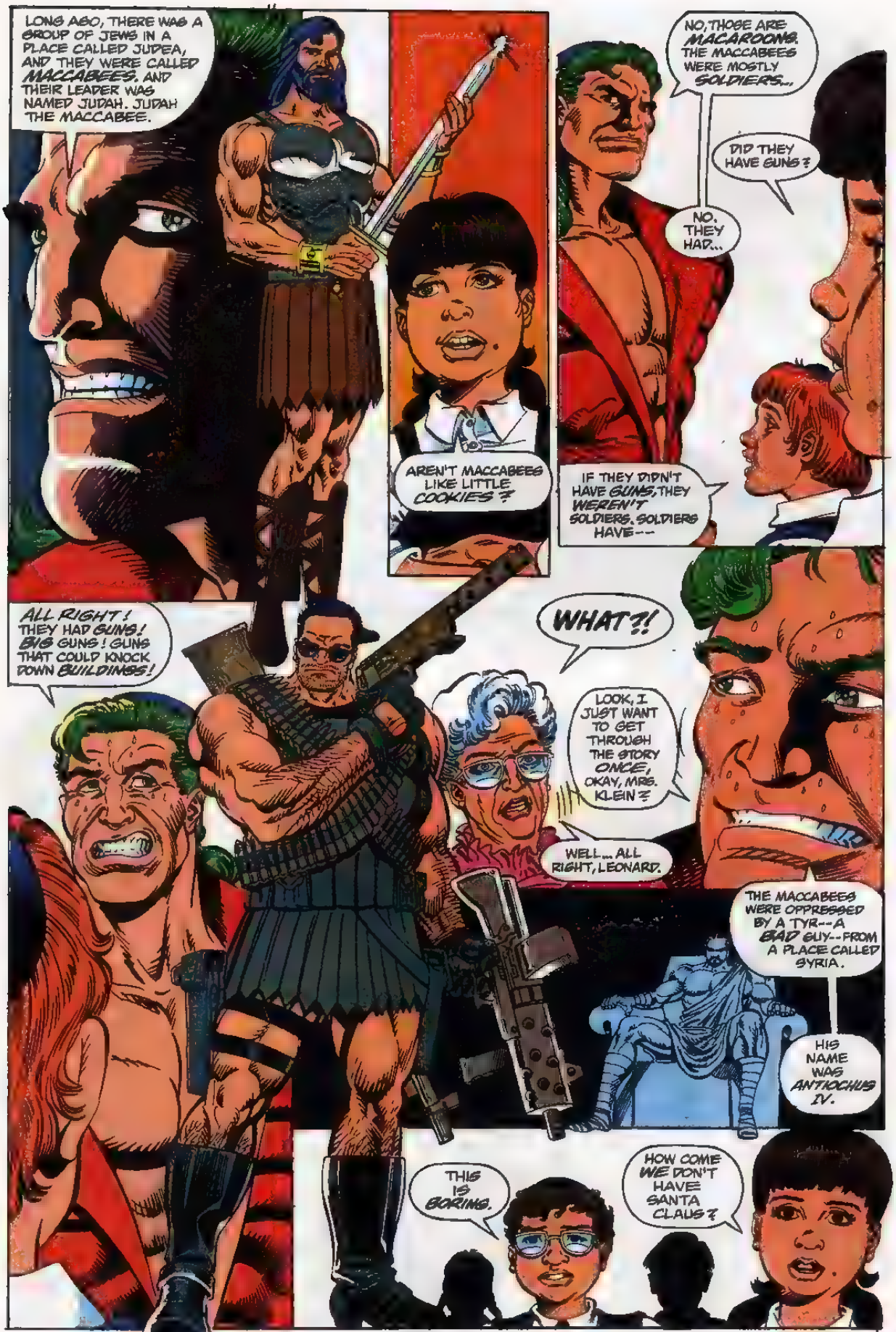
— "Big Boughs of Holly" Barry Dutter

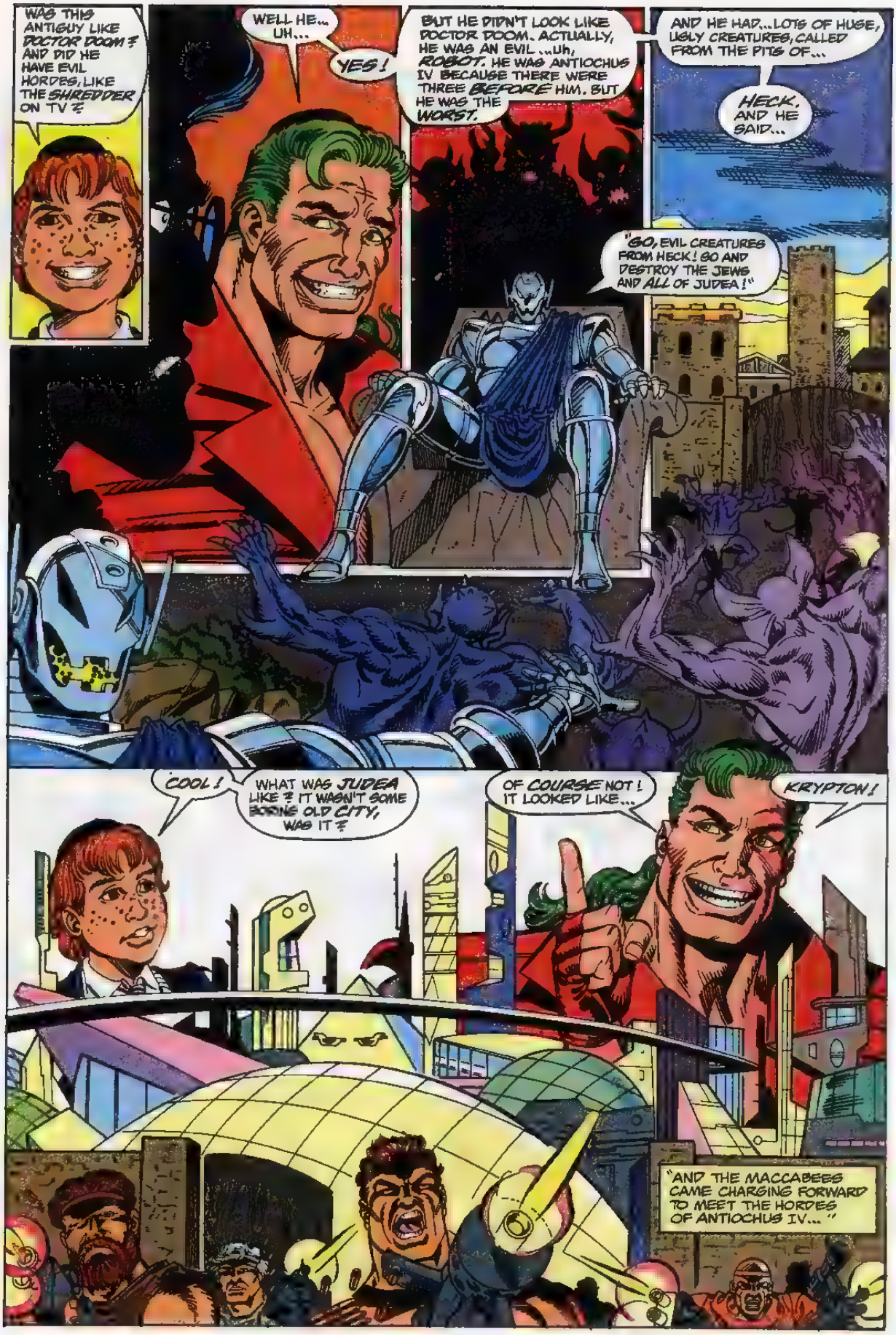


DARREN ALICK/STEVE MONTANO

REVISIONIST HISTORY
CHILDREN, THIS IS DOCTOR LEONARD SAMSON. I WAS HIS TEACHER HERE AT THE YESHIVA WHEN HE WAS A VERY LITTLE BOY.
HI, KIDS.
AND, AS A SPECIAL TREAT, LEONARD HAS COME BY TO TELL YOU ALL THE STORY OF CHANUKAH. SO I WANT YOU ALL TO PAY CLOSE ATTENTION.
THANKS, MRS. KLEIN. AND KIDS... IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, JUST ASK.
PETER DAVID
WRITER
(AND BASED ON AN INCIDENT FROM HIS HEBREW SCHOOL DAYS.)
JOHN HEBERT
PENCILS
MIKE DECARLO
INKS
BRAD JOYCE
LETTERS
GLYNIS OLIVER
COLORS

WOW, THAT WAS FAST. WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION, SON?
WHY IS YOUR HAIR GREEN?
IT JUST IS.
NOW, A LONG TIME--
DID YOU FIGHT THE HULK?
I BET THE HULK KICKED YOUR BUTT.
YES, I FOUGHT THE HULK. NOW A LONG TIME AG--
NATHAN, THAT'S QUITE ENOUGH.
I'M SORRY, LEONARD. THESE ALEPH CLASSES CAN GET A LITTLE ROWDY SOMETIMES. PLEASE, CONTINUE.
THANK YOU, MRS. KLEIN.
NOW, A LONG TIME AGO... MANY, MANY CENTURIES...
WHAT'S A CENTURY?
IT'S A HUNDRED YEARS.
SO HUNDREDS AND HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO...
WERE THERE PEOPLE THEN?
YES, THERE WERE PEOPLE.
DID THEY HAVE CABLE TV?
NO, THEY DIDN'T HAVE CABLE TV.
THEN HOW DID THEY WATCH TV?
ELI! ALL OF YOU! HUSH!
YOU'RE ANNOYING DOCTOR SAMSON!


LONG AGO, THERE WAS A GROUP OF JEWS IN A PLACE CALLED JUDEA, AND THEY WERE CALLED MACCABEES. AND THEIR LEADER WAS NAMED JUDAH. JUDAH THE MACCABEE.
AREN'T MACCABEES LIKE LITTLE COOKIES?
NO, THOSE ARE MACAROONS. THE MACCABEES WERE MOSTLY SOLDIERS...
DID THEY HAVE GUNS?
NO, THEY HAD...
IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE GUNS, THEY WEREN'T SOLDIERS. SOLDIERS HAVE---
ALL RIGHT! THEY HAD GUNS! BIG GUNS! GUNS THAT COULD KNOCK DOWN BUILDINGS!
WHAT?!
LOOK, I JUST WANT TO GET THROUGH THE STORY ONCE, OKAY, MRS. KLEIN?
WELL... ALL RIGHT, LEONARD.
THE MACCABEES WERE OPPRESSED BY A TYR--A BAD GUY--FROM A PLACE CALLED SYRIA.
HIS NAME WAS ANTIOCHUS IV.
THIS IS BORING.
HOW COME WE DON'T HAVE SANTA CLAUS?


WAS THIS ANTIGUY LIKE DOCTOR DOOM? AND DID HE HAVE EVIL HORDES, LIKE THE SHREDDER ON TV?
WELL HE... UH...
YES!
BUT HE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE DOCTOR DOOM. ACTUALLY, HE WAS AN EVIL ...UH, ROBOT. HE WAS ANTIOCHUS IV BECAUSE THERE WERE THREE BEFORE HIM. BUT HE WAS THE WORST.
AND HE HAD...LOTS OF HUGE, UGLY CREATURES, CALLED FROM THE PITS OF...
HECK, AND HE SAID...
"GO, EVIL CREATURES FROM HECK! GO AND DESTROY THE JEWS AND ALL OF JUDEA!"
COOL!
WHAT WAS JUDEA LIKE? IT WASN'T SOME BORING OLD CITY, WAS IT?
OF COURSE NOT! IT LOOKED LIKE...
KRYPTON!
"AND THE MACCABEES CAME CHARGING FORWARD TO MEET THE HORDES OF ANTIOCHUS IV..."

WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA THERE? AND WOLVERINE?
SURE! WHY NOT?
CAP, WOLVERINE, THE HULK... LOTSA GUYS! ISN'T THIS EXCITING?
YEAH! IS THIS THE PART WITH GOLIATH?
"RIGHT! GOLIATH THE GIANT, BUT CAPTAIN AMERICA HIT HIM IN THE FOREHEAD WITH HIS SHIELD AND KNOCKED HIM COLD."
I THOUGHT IT WAS DAVID, AND HE HIT HIM WITH A ROCK.
THAT WAS, Uh... A GOLIATH CLONE.

"AT ANY RATE, THEY DEFEATED THE EVIL ANTIOCHUS, AND--"
"HOW'D THEY BEAT HIM, DOCTOR SAMSON?"
THEY, UH... NUKED HIM.
AFTER HE WAS NUKED, THEY TOOK BACK THEIR TEMPLE. AND IT WAS FILLED WITH IDOLS...
MY DAD SAYS HIS IDOL IS ELVIS.
RIGHT. IT WAS FILLED WITH STATUES AND PICTURES OF ELVIS.
SO THEY CLEANED OUT THE IDOLS, AND THEY WENT TO LIGHT THE HOLY LAMP. BUT THEY DISCOVERED THERE WAS ONLY ENOUGH OIL TO LIGHT THE LAMP FOR ONE DAY.
I THOUGHT YOU PUT OIL IN CARS, NOT LAMPS. AND WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST PLUG THE LAMP IN?
IT WAS A REALLY OLD KIND OF LAMP. IT DIDN'T HAVE A CORD OR ANYTHING.

"SO THEY ONLY HAD ENOUGH OIL TO LIGHT THE LAMP FOR ONE D--"
10W 30
WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST USE BATTERIES? THOSE KEEP GOING AND GOING AND GOING.
THEY WERE OUT OF BATTERIES.
SO THEY POURED THE OIL INTO THE LAMP, AND LO AND BEHOLD, A MIRACLE OCCURRED. INSTEAD OF JUST ONE DAY...
SMUSH
THE FLAME BURNED FOR EIGHT WHOLE DAYS.
I DON'T THINK IT WAS A MIRACLE. I BET THE HUMAN TORCH WAS HIDING UNDER IT AND MADE THE FLAME GO.
NOT ONLY THAT, BUT I BET THE HUMAN TORCH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BURNING BUSH. AND Y'KNOW WHAT ELSE? HE---

LOOK, KID. THE JEWS BEAT THE SYRIANS. THEY CLEANED OUT THE TEMPLE. THEY FOUND THE LAMP. ONLY ENOUGH OIL TO BURN FOR ONE DAY. IT BURNED FOR EIGHT.
GET IT?
GOT IT.
GOOD!
BUT WHAT ABOUT SANTA CLAUS? YOU DIDN'T TELL US.
HOW COME WE DON'T HAVE SANTA CLAUS? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?
ANTIOCHUS GOT HIM.
ACME
6 TON ANVIL
WHAM
Uh...
HEY, LOOK, KIDS... C'MON...
I WAS ONLY JOK--
--ing...
WAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH
LET ME GUESS. NO SCHOOLING IN CHILD PSYCHOLOGY, RIGHT, LEONARD?
LOOK, I'M SORRY. THEY... THEY RATTLED ME. THEY...
JUST GO.
DOES...Um...DOES THIS MEAN YOU DON'T WANT ME TO COME BACK AND TELL THEM ABOUT PASSOVER?
I SAID GO!!
The End.

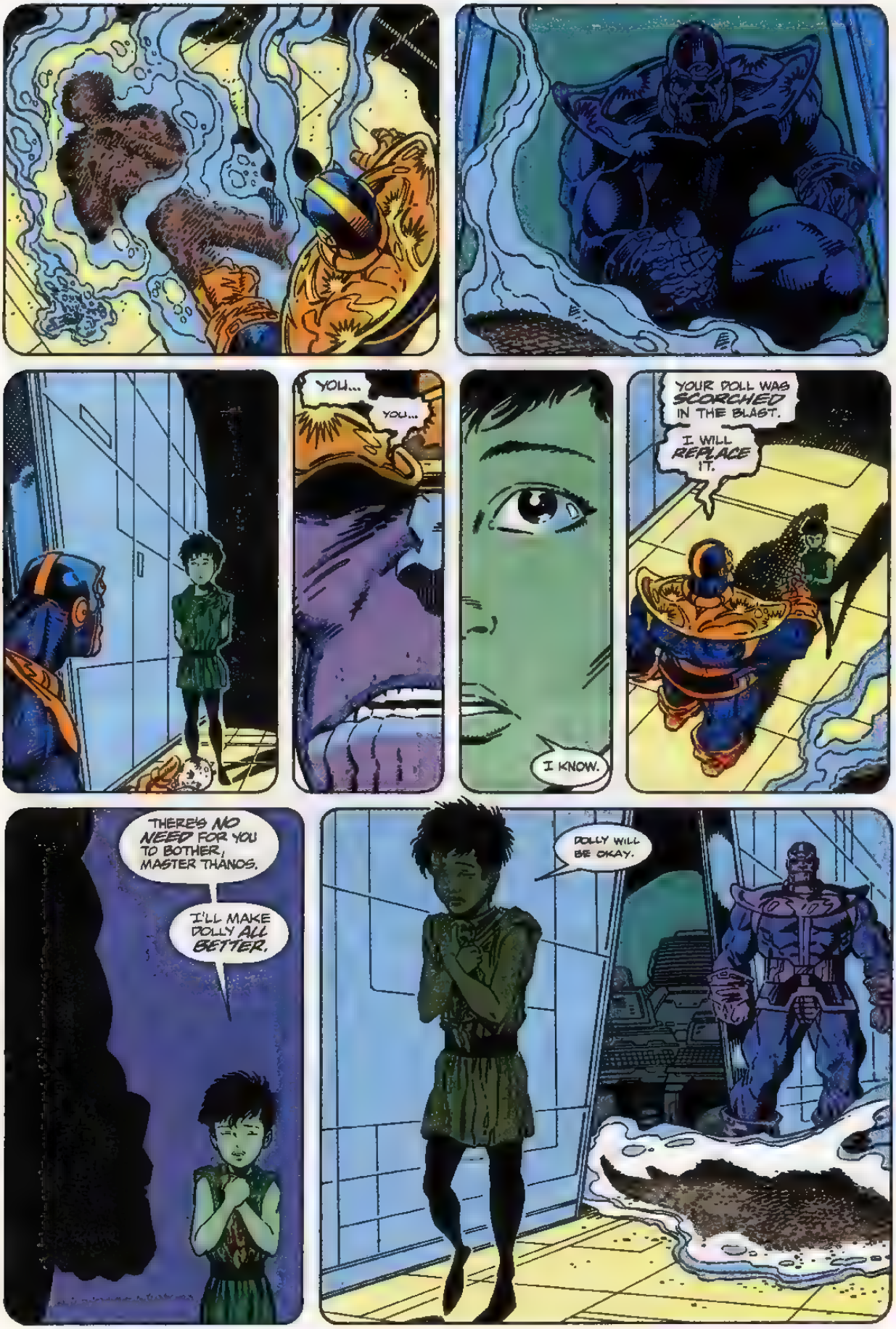
ERNIE CHAN

4ULE MEMORY
I, THANOS, AM EMBARKED ON A PROGRAM OF REOPENING AND RETROFITTING SEVERAL OF MY FORMER HIDEAWAYS.
RECENT EVENTS HAVE CLEARLY SHOWN THAT, DESPITE SETTING ASIDE MY GALAXY CONQUERING INTENTIONS, THE UNIVERSE STILL REMAINS A DANGEROUS PLACE FOR THIS PARTICULAR TITAN.
YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN ONE OF THESE OLD HAUNTS MIGHT PROVE AN ADVANTAGE.
Sir, what shall we do with the items the crew cleaned out of the back rooms?
DISPOSE OF THEM.
WAIT!
LET ME SEE THE CONTENTS OF THAT BOX.
What have you there, Master Thanos?
SIMPLY A DOLL.
JIM STARLIN WRITER
RON LIM ART
TERRY AUSTIN INKS
BRAD JOYCE-LETTERS
TOM VINCENT-COLORS

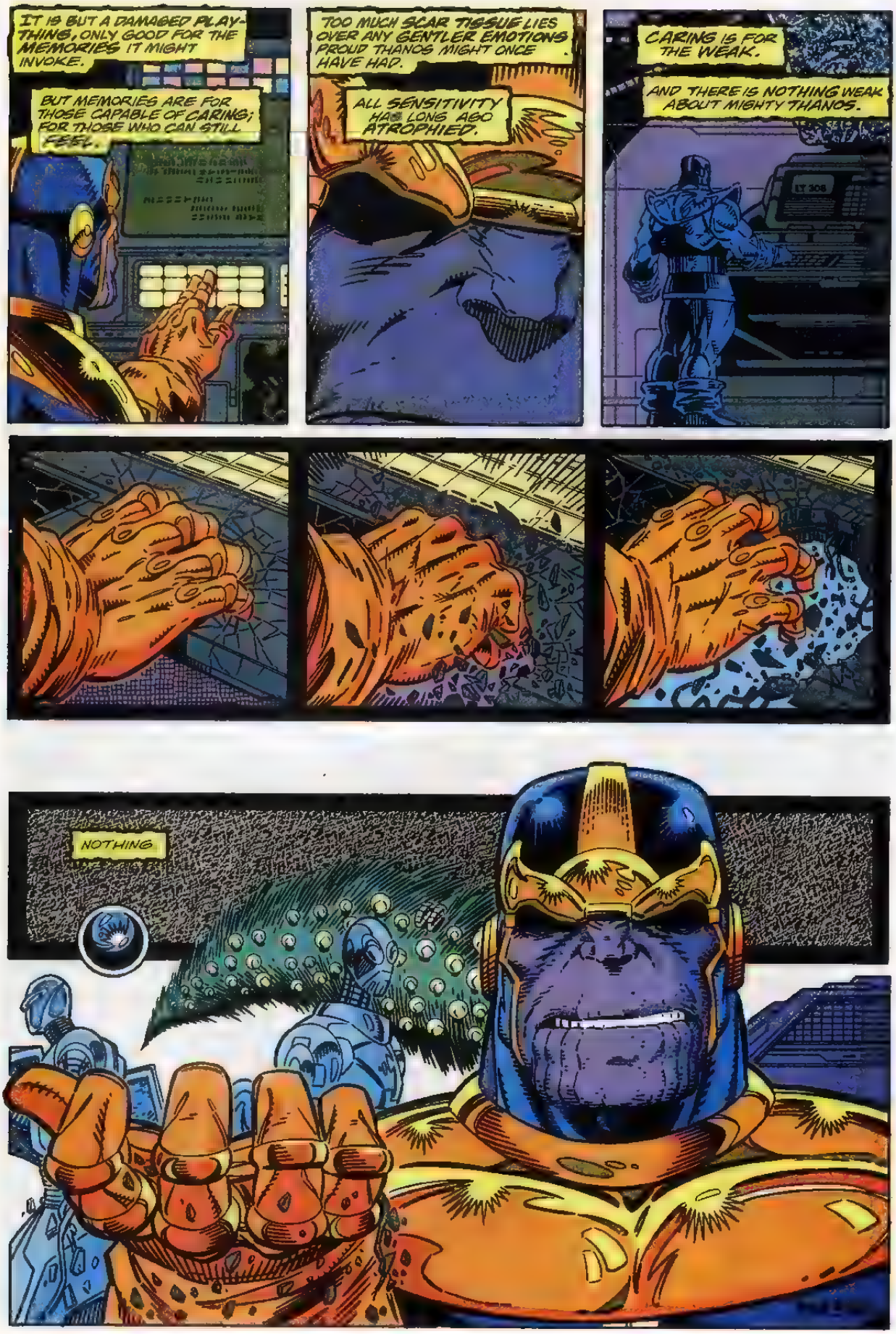
IT ONCE BELONGED TO A CHILD NAMED GAMORA.
Did you not raise this woman from infancy to become a field operative in your past endeavors?
"YES, BUT I DID NOT DESIRE JUST ANY PSYCHOPATHIC ASSASSIN IN MY EMPLOY.
"I WANTED A FIGHTING AND KILLING MACHINE, BUT ONE THAT COULD REASON WITH A SOUND AND RATIONAL MIND."
SO I ENDEAVORED TO GIVE GAMORA THE TRAINING SHE WOULD NEED FOR HER FUTURE LABORS...
...WHILE GRANTING HER AS NORMAL A CHILDHOOD AS I COULD MUSTER.
I EVEN WENT SO FAR AS ASSIGNING HER A BIRTH-DAY AND...
...CELEBRATING CERTAIN HOLIDAYS WITH THE CHILD IN ORDER TO PERPETRATE THE ILLUSION OF FAMILY LIFE.
ONE OF THE HOLIDAYS WE HONORED WAS THE PRE-CHRISTIAN YULE WITH SHADES OF MODERN EARTH'S CHRISTMAS TOSSED INTO THE MIX.
"GAMORA WAS SO YOUNG BACK THEN. SHE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN FIVE YEARS OLD."
A BABY DOLL!

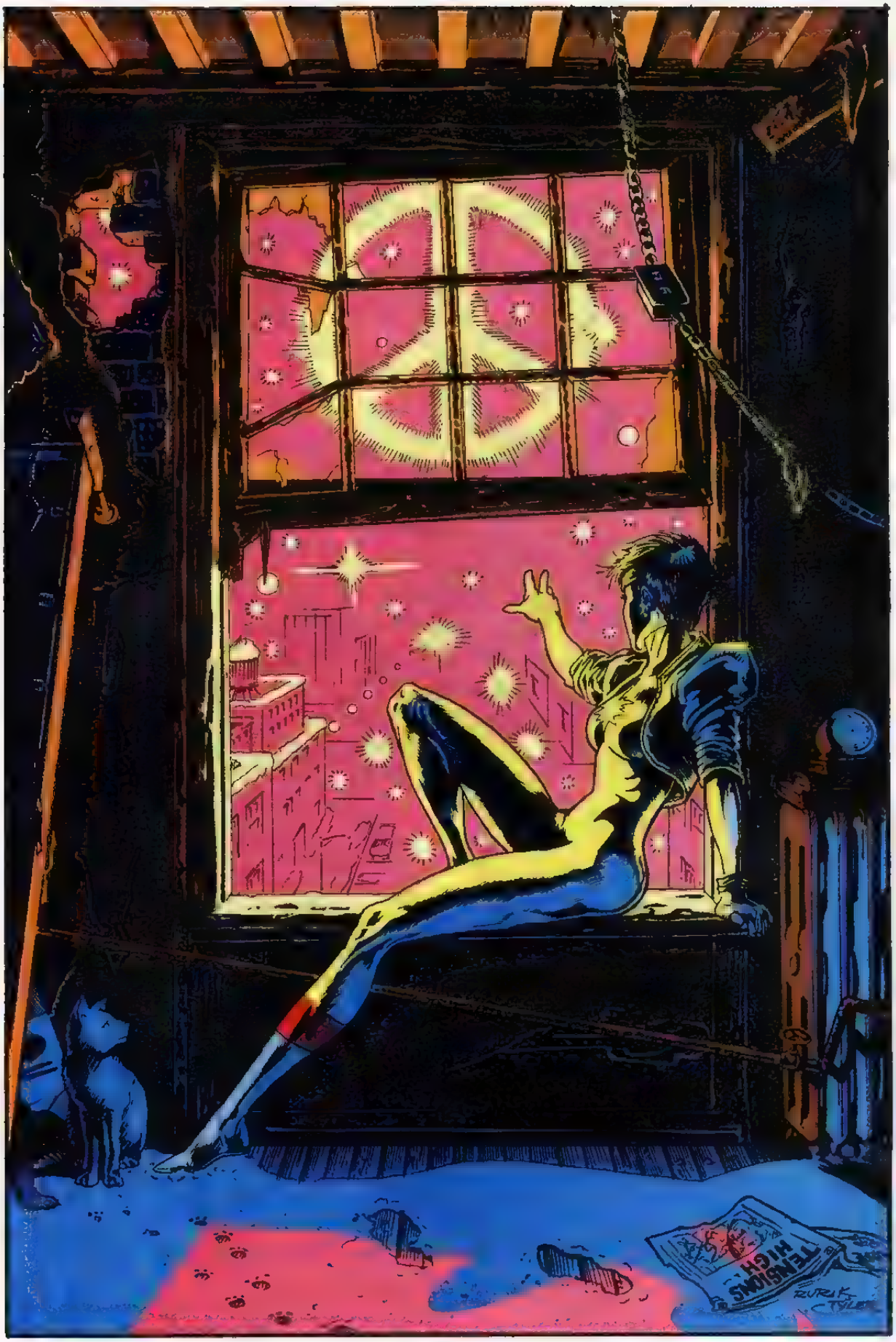
A BABY DOLL...FOR ME?
FOR WHO ELSE, CHILD?
OH THANK YOU, MASTER THANOS.
YOU ARE WELCOME.
NOW IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME; WORK AWAITS ME IN THE LAB.
MASTER THANOS...
YES, CHILD?
CAN WE...
CAN WE MAYBE GO TO THE LAGOON LATER TODAY?
I REALLY LOVE WATCHING THE DOLPHINS.
PERHAPS.

"EVEN BACK THEN, THANOS OF TITAN HAD HIS ENEMIES.
"UNFORTUNATELY, I WAS NOWHERE NEAR AS SECURITY CONSCIOUS THEN AS I AM TODAY.
"HIS NAME WAS XTORAL LAXTAN.
"I HAD HAD BUSINESS DEALINGS WITH HIS FAMILY.
"THEY HAD TRIED TO CHEAT ME AND I HAD DEALT WITH THEM ACCORDINGLY.
"I DID NOT TAKE SERIOUSLY THE BLOOD OATH XTORAL LAXTAN HAD REPORTEDLY TAKEN TO AVENGE HIS FAMILY.
"THAT NEARLY PROVED TO BE A FATAL MISCALCULATION."


YOU...
YOU...
I KNOW.
YOUR DOLL WAS SCORCHED IN THE BLAST.
I WILL REPLACE IT.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO BOTHER, MASTER THANOS.
I'LL MAKE DOLLY ALL BETTER.
DOLLY WILL BE OKAY.

GAMORA.
YES, MASTER ?
ONCE I'VE CLEANED UP THE LAB, WE SHALL GO TO THE LAGOON.
THANK YOU, MASTER.
SHE SAVED MY LIFE, THEN THANKED ME FOR TAKING HER ON AN OUTING.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN THAT GAMORA WOULD NOT WORK OUT AS A GOOD ASSASSIN.
THAT SHE WOULD ONE DAY TURN AGAINST ME.
NOW SHE RUNS WITH ADAM WARLOCK AND HIS INFINITY WATCH.
SO MANY CHANGES.
Sir, what should we do with the doll?
TO THE INCINERATOR WITH THE REST OF THE GARBAGE.


IT IS BUT A DAMAGED PLAY-THING, ONLY GOOD FOR THE MEMORIES IT MIGHT INVOKE.
BUT MEMORIES ARE FOR THOSE CAPABLE OF CARING; FOR THOSE WHO CAN STILL FEEL.
TOO MUCH SCAR TISSUE LIES OVER ANY GENTLER EMOTIONS PROUD THANOS MIGHT ONCE HAVE HAD.
ALL SENSITIVITY HAS LONG AGO ATROPHIED.
CARING IS FOR THE WEAK.
AND THERE IS NOTHING WEAK ABOUT MIGHTY THANOS.
NOTHING


TENSIONS HIGH

SHOLLY FISCH
WRITER

TOM MORGAN
ARTIST

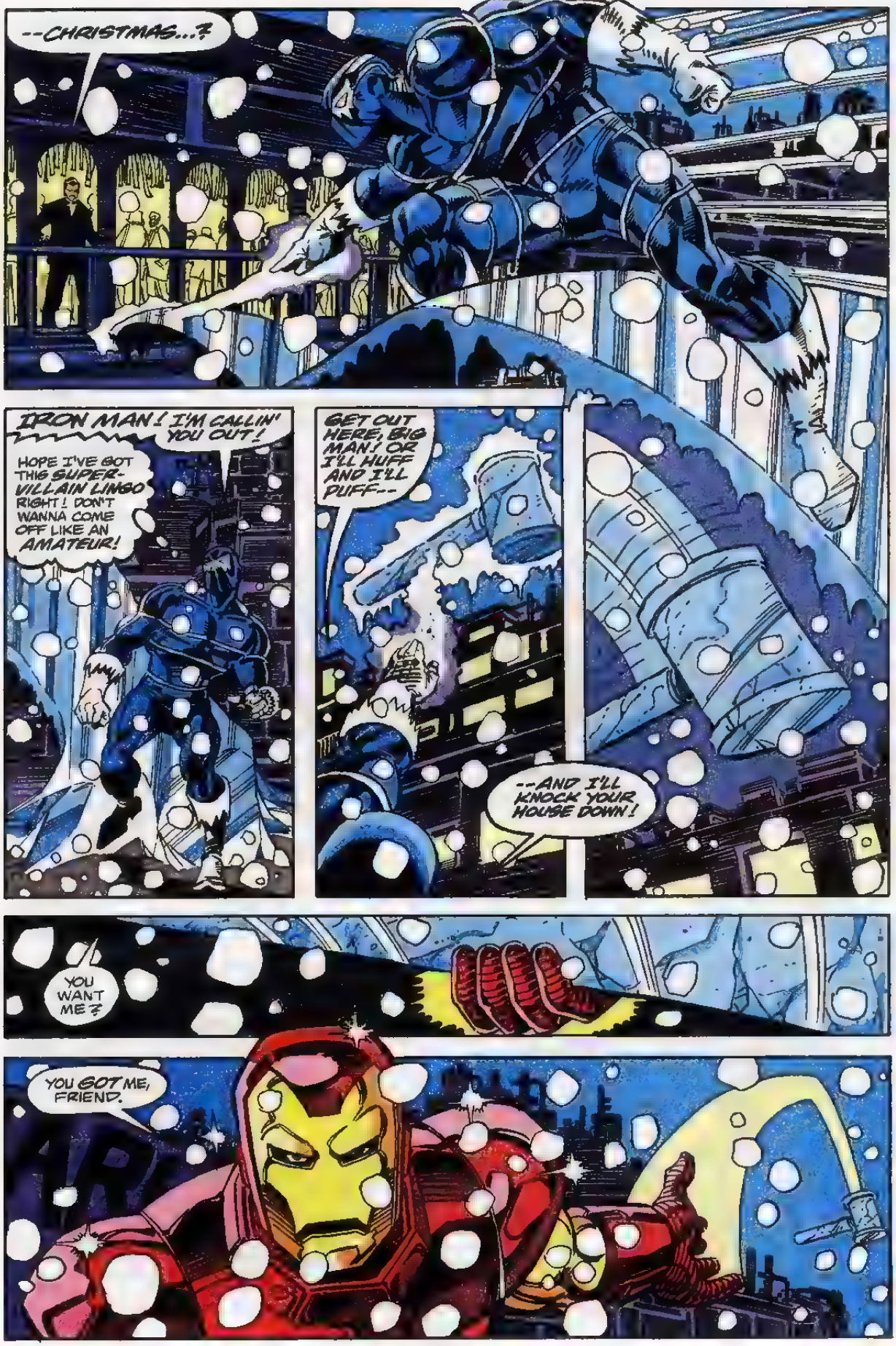
BRAD K. JOHNS
LETTERER

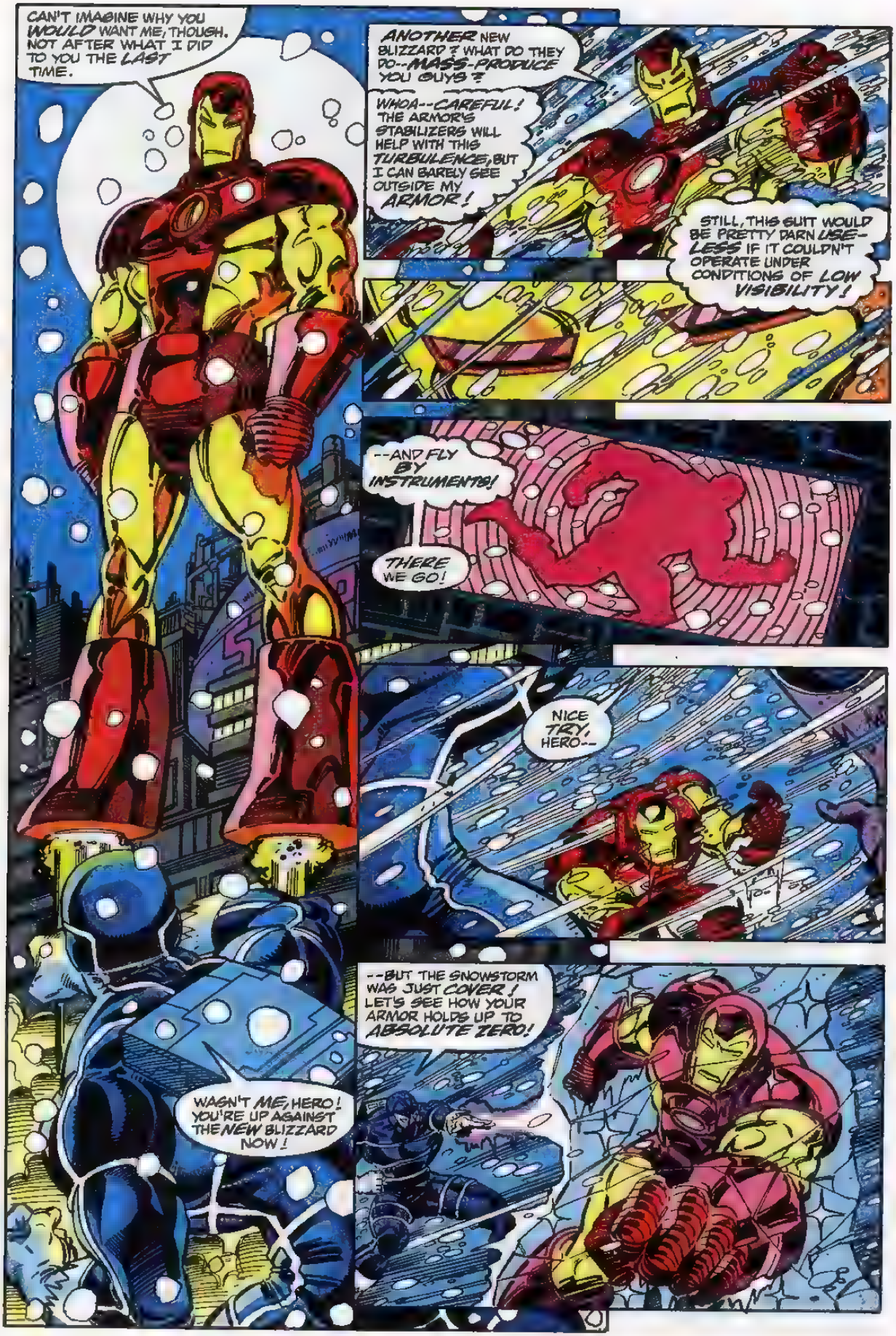
ED LAZELLARI
COLORIST

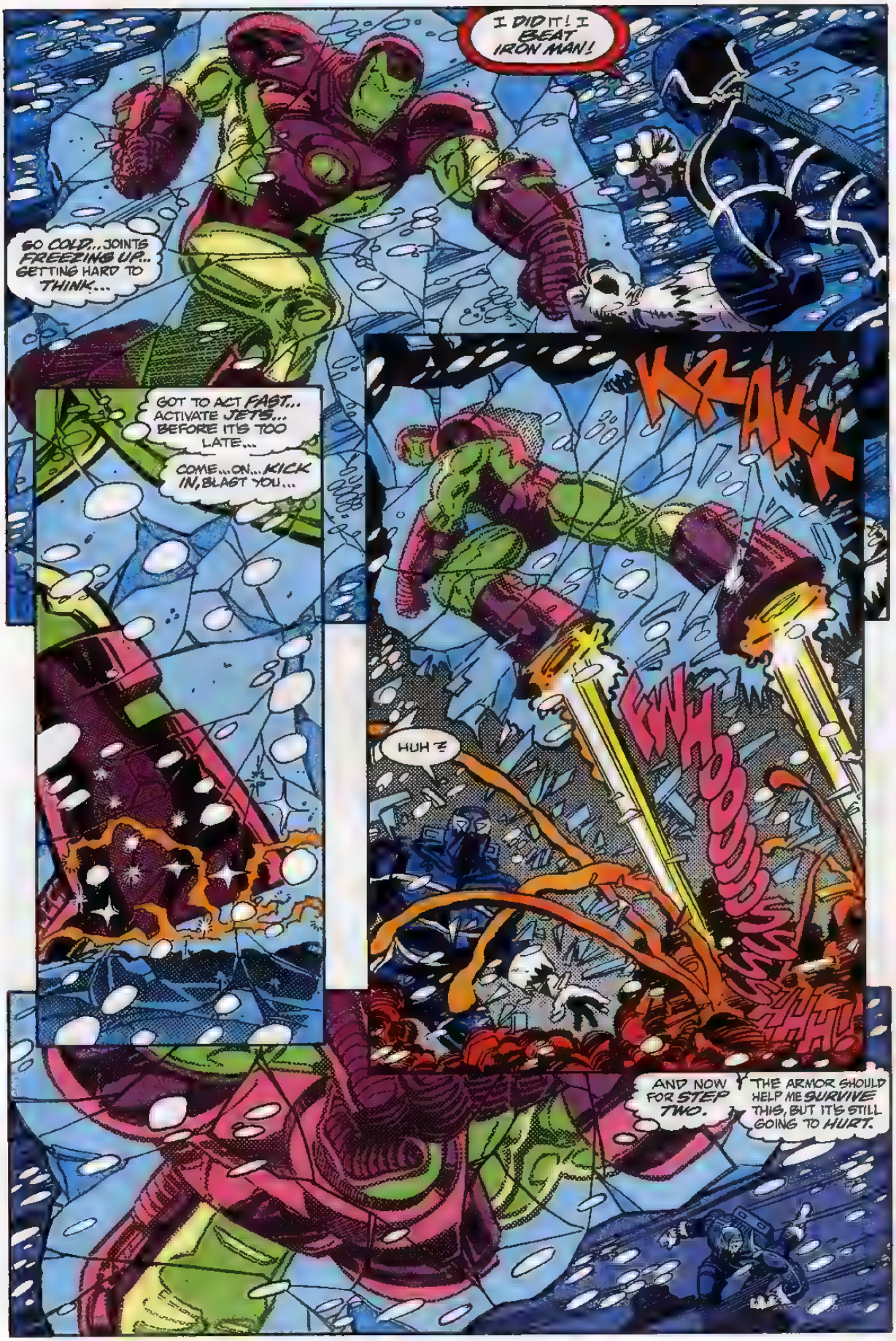
THIS STORY OCCURED IN HAPPIER TIMES FOR THE STARK "FAMILY"--WELL BEFORE THE EVENTS OF CURRENT IRON MAN ISSUES.

YEAH, AND THEN WHAT? CHECK BACK AGAIN IN FEBRUARY? AND THEN A MONTH AFTER THAT?!
WE BEEN DOIN' THIS FOR TWO MONTHS ALREADY! WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAY WHAT YOU MEAN--
--NOBODY WANTS TO HIRE AN EX-- CON!
PARAGON EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
IT AIN'T RIGHT. I DID MY TIME FOR KNOCKIN' OVER THAT LIQUOR STORE.
AND IT AIN'T JUST ME. SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE I GREW UP WITH IS DOIN' TIME.
BRAGGER'S STILL IN SEAGATE, JUNIOR LEE PULLED HARD TIME IN RYKER'S...
EVEN DONNY-- WE THOUGHT HE HAD IT MADE WHEN JUSTIN HAMMER HIRED HIM TO BE BLIZZARD! BUT INSTEAD, HE WINDS UP IN THE VAULT!
MA?
SHE'S NOT HOME. GOOD.
'CAUSE SHE NEVER REALIZED THAT DONNY ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF HIS SPARE COSTUME.
SORRY, MA.
I TRIED TO GO STRAIGHT, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME.
I'M GONNA DO A BETTER JOB OF THIS THAN DONNY DID, THOUGH. AND TO PROVE IT, I'LL START BY TAKIN' DOWN THE GUY WHO SENT DONNY TO JAIL--

"--IRON MAN!"
TAKE A LESSON, JIM. HAVING SPOTTED HIS PREY BENEATH THE MISTLETOE, INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED PLAYBOY TONY STARK MOVES IN FOR THE KILL!
MERRY CHRISTMAS, MRS. ARBOGAST!
X-MAS
MERRY
IT WON'T BE CHRISTMAS FOR ANOTHER FEW DAYS, MR. STARK. BUT MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU TOO.
HEY, YOU KIDS! NONE OF THAT KISSING NOW!
HI, ABE. HAPPY CHANUKAH!
THANKS. AND THANKS FOR REMEMBERING THE POTATO LATKES. THIS IS QUITE A PARTY!
IT'S BEEN QUITE A YEAR! THANKS TO THE CONTRACTS WE PICKED UP THIS YEAR, STARK ENTERPRISES IS REALLY GETTING OFF THE GROUND.
AND AS IF WE NEEDED ANOTHER GOOD OMEN, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERY DAY IN LOS ANGELES-- IT'S STARTED TO SNOW! WE MAY EVEN GET A WHITE--

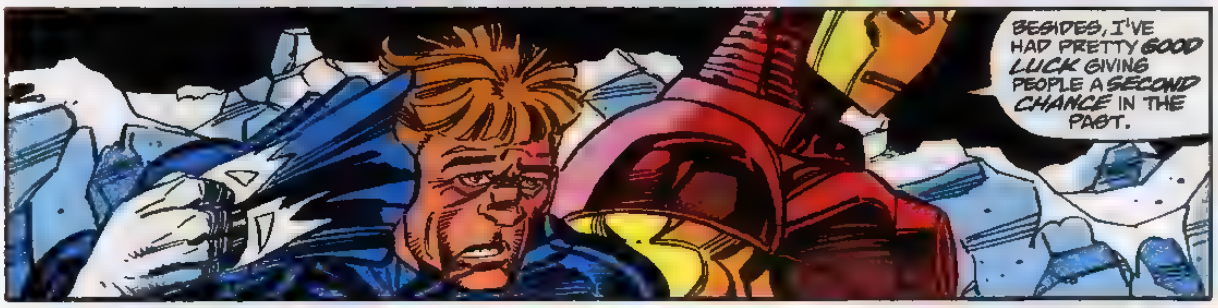

--CHRISTMAS...?
IRON MAN! I'M CALLIN' YOU OUT!
HOPE I'VE GOT THIS SUPER-VILLAIN LINGO RIGHT! DON'T WANNA COME OFF LIKE AN AMATEUR!
GET OUT HERE, BIG MAN! OR I'LL HUFF AND I'LL PUFF--
--AND I'LL KNOCK YOUR HOUSE DOWN!
YOU WANT ME?
YOU GOT ME, FRIEND.


CAN'T IMAGINE WHY YOU WOULD WANT ME, THOUGH. NOT AFTER WHAT I DID TO YOU THE LAST TIME.
ANOTHER NEW BLIZZARD? WHAT DO THEY DO--MASS-PRODUCE YOU GUYS?
WHOA--CAREFUL! THE ARMOR'S STABILIZERS WILL HELP WITH THIS TURBULENCE, BUT I CAN BARELY SEE OUTSIDE MY ARMOR!
STILL, THIS SUIT WOULD BE PRETTY DARN USE-LESS IF IT COULDN'T OPERATE UNDER CONDITIONS OF LOW VISIBILITY!
--AND FLY BY INSTRUMENTS!
THERE WE GO!
NICE TRY, HERO--
--BUT THE SNOWSTORM WAS JUST COVER! LET'S SEE HOW YOUR ARMOR HOLDS UP TO ABSOLUTE ZERO!
WASN'T ME, HERO! YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE NEW BLIZZARD NOW!


I DID IT! I BEAT IRON MAN!
SO COLD... JOINTS FREEZING UP... GETTING HARD TO THINK...
GOT TO ACT FAST... ACTIVATE JETS... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...
COME...ON... KICK IN, BLAST YOU...
KRAK
HUH?
FWHOOOOSSSHH!
AND NOW FOR STEP TWO.
THE ARMOR SHOULD HELP ME SURVIVE THIS, BUT IT'S STILL GOING TO HURT.

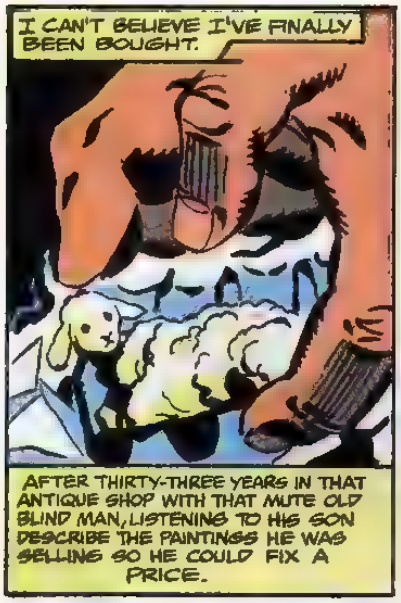
OUCH!
KRE-KKKSSSHH
JUST FULL OF TRICKS, AIN'TCHA? BUT NOW, I'VE GOT YOU WHERE I WANT YOU--DAZED AND HELPLESS!
WITH ALL OF THIS SNOW AND ICE TO REFLECT MY CHEST BEAM?
"HELPLESS?"
AAAHHHH! MY EYES!
WHAT'S WRONG, FRIEND? A LITTLE SNOWBLIND?
IT'LL PASS.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I THOUGHT I COULD DO THIS. I COULDN'T GO STRAIGHT. I COULDN'T EVEN GET A JOB.
I CAN'T DO NOTHIN'.

COULDN'T GET A JOB, EH?
HAVE YOU TRIED HERE?
YOU'D...HELP ME?
AFTER THIS?
THAT DEPENDS. IF THIS IS A SCAM, I'LL BE ALL OVER YOU. BUT IF YOU'RE SERIOUS...
IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR.


BESIDES, I'VE HAD PRETTY GOOD LUCK GIVING PEOPLE A SECOND CHANCE IN THE PAST.

LIKE THIS ONE VILLAIN I USED TO FIGHT A LOT. MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF HIM...
CALLS HIMSELF HAWKEYE...
The End

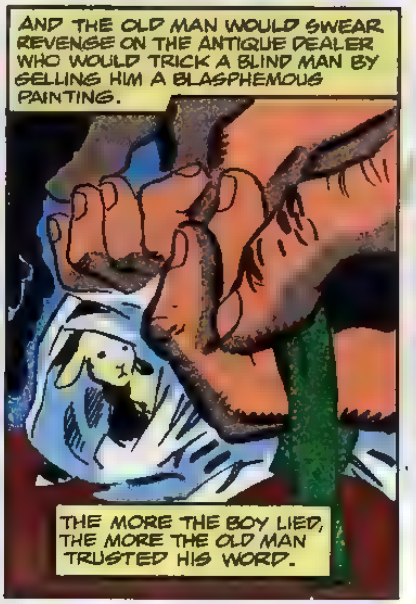
HULK OF X-MAS PAST!


I CAN'T BELIEVE I'VE FINALLY BEEN BOUGHT.
AFTER THIRTY-THREE YEARS IN THAT ANTIQUE SHOP WITH THAT MUTE OLD BLIND MAN, LISTENING TO HIS SON DESCRIBE THE PAINTINGS HE WAS SELLING SO HE COULD FIX A PRICE.

AND ME, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I FINALLY FIND OUT WHAT I COST.
I WONDER, WILL I MISS THEM?

THE BOY WOULD STARE INTO THE PICTURES WITH HIS MOON-FACE, LIKE HE WAS IN A TRANCE, AND FINALLY SAY: "A DARK FOREST, DENSE AND SAD, HIDES THREE ANGELS WITH NO FACES."
"WHAT ARE THEY DOING?" THE OLD MAN WOULD CROAK AT HIM.
AN' MOON-FACE WOULD ANSWER: "NOTHIN' MUCH."

AND THEN, AS THE BOY GREW AND GOT SICK OF HIS LIFE HE BEGAN TO LIE TO THE OLD MAN.
"IT'S A DIRTY PAINTING." HE'D SAY. "THE ANGELS ARE LIFTING THEIR SKIRTS."


AND THE OLD MAN WOULD SWEAR REVENGE ON THE ANTIQUE DEALER WHO WOULD TRICK A BLIND MAN BY SELLING HIM A BLASPHEMOUS PAINTING.
THE MORE THE BOY LIED, THE MORE THE OLD MAN TRUSTED HIS WORD.

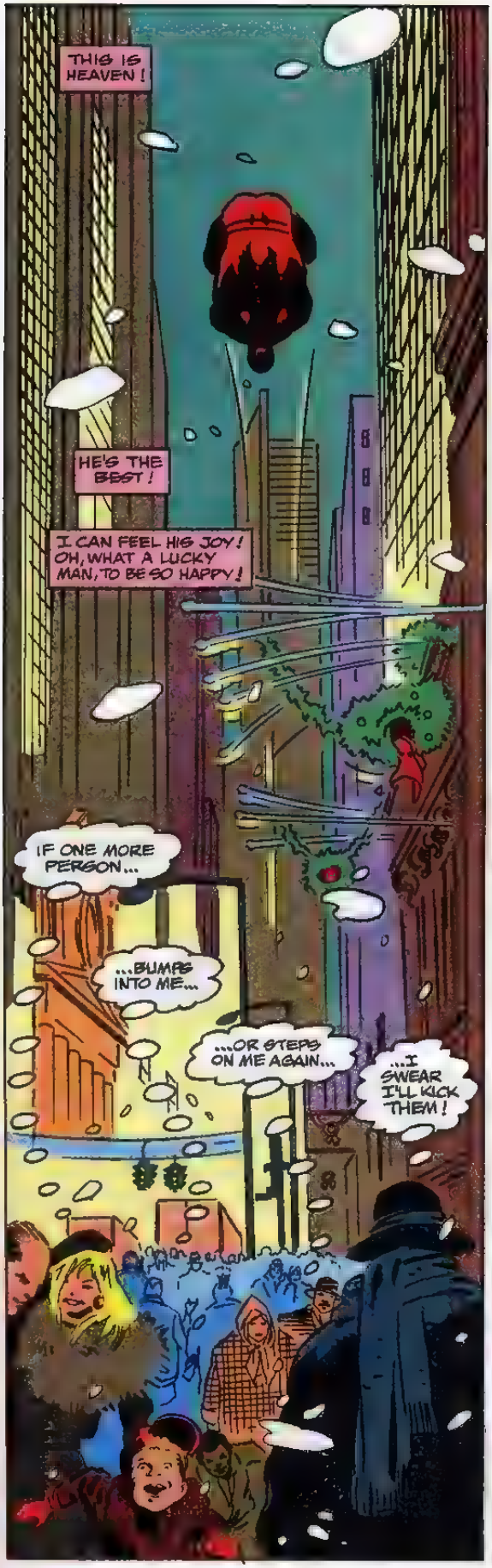
SO. HERE I AM, BORN AGAIN AT THIRTY THREE. A NEW LIFE.
AND ME NO SPRING LAMB. MY WORLD WAS AS SMALL AS THE CURIO SHOP'S WALLS, AND NOW MAYBE I'LL GET TO SEE SOMETHING BIG!

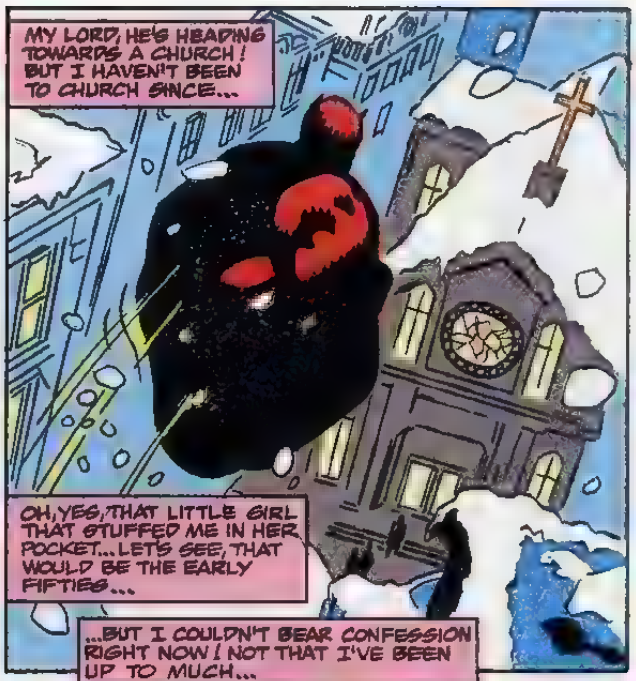
THIS GUY WHO BOUGHT ME, WRAPS ME UP WITH SUCH SENSITIVE FINGERS.

GEE, JUST AS I WAS GETTIN' USED TO HIS GENTLE TOUCH, I REALIZE I MUST BE A PRESENT FOR SOMEONE.
ONLY REASON TO WRAP ME UP.

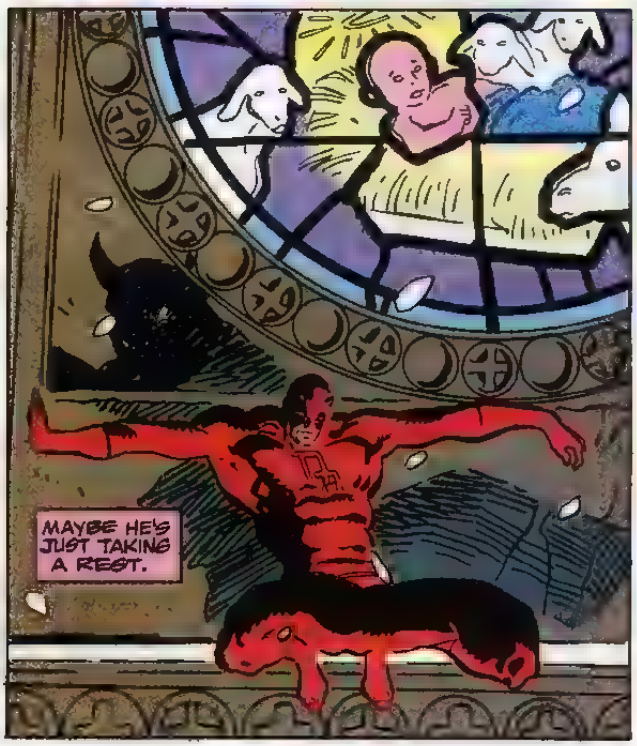
I WONDER WHO I'M FOR?

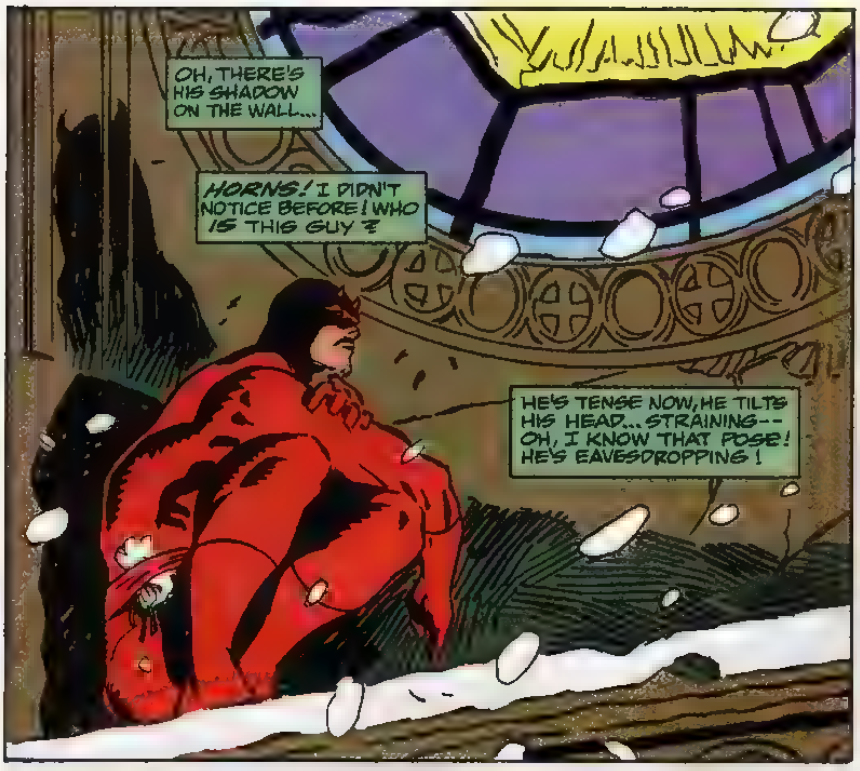
THE RAPT LAMB
WOW, THIS GUY CAN FLY!
I'M UPSIDEDOWN! I CAN FEEL HIS MUSCLES TENSE... THEN RELEASE. I CAN FEEL HIS BLOOD PUMPING... HE LIKES THIS! OH, YEAH, HE'S HAPPY NOW!
OUCH, WIND SURE IS PICKIN' UP.
THAT'S NO WIND, THAT'S THE BACKDRAFT--
--FROM DAREDEVIL.
CHRISTMAS ALWAYS MAKES ME THINK OF KIDS.
EVEN I USED TO HAVE A FEW, I'D SEND 'EM A CARD IF I HAD A PEN...
I BETTER GET HARVEY SOMETHING NICE FOR CHRISTMAS...
...OTHERWISE HE'LL SUSPECT THAT I DON'T LOVE HIM AND I'M CHEATIN' ON HIM.
WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO GET SUSPICIOUS RIGHT BEFORE ME AN' JACK FIND A CHANCE TO SHOOT THE FAT LUG.
I'LL START MY DIET RIGHT AFTER THE TWENTY FIFTH...
...OR NO, RIGHT AFTER NEW YEAR'S.
HOPE SISSY GETS ME THAT NEW FLY-CASTER...
OH, YEAH. RUMOR HAS IT HE GETS DEPRESSED ON CHRISTMAS.
WELL, HE SHOULD BE. LOOK AROUND YOU, MAN.
ANN NOCENTI WRITER • TOM GRINDBERG PENCILER • FRED FREDERICKS INKER • BRAD K. JOYCE LETTERER • EVELYN STEIN COLORS • RENÉE WITTERSTAETTER EDITOR • TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF


THIS IS HEAVEN!
HE'S THE BEST!
I CAN FEEL HIS JOY! OH, WHAT A LUCKY MAN, TO BE SO HAPPY!
IF ONE MORE PERSON...
...BUMPS INTO ME...
...OR STEPS ON ME AGAIN...
...I SWEAR I'LL KICK THEM!


MY LORD, HE'S HEADING TOWARDS A CHURCH! BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN TO CHURCH SINCE...
OH, YES, THAT LITTLE GIRL THAT STUFFED ME IN HER POCKET... LET'S SEE, THAT WOULD BE THE EARLY FIFTIES...
...BUT I COULDN'T BEAR CONFESSION RIGHT NOW! NOT THAT I'VE BEEN UP TO MUCH...

EXCEPT EAVESDROPPING... AND MURDEROUS THOUGHTS... AND A BIT OF SLOTH I GUESS.


MAYBE HE'S JUST TAKING A REST.


OH, THERE'S HIS SHADOW ON THE WALL...
HORNS! I DIDN'T NOTICE BEFORE! WHO IS THIS GUY ?
HE'S TENSE NOW, HE TILTS HIS HEAD... STRAINING-- OH, I KNOW THAT POSE! HE'S EAVESDROPPING!

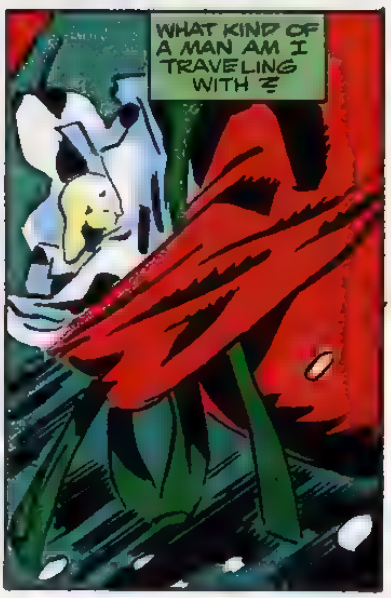
SOMEONE IN THE CHURCH...

HELLO, MAGGIE.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MY DEAR. IS SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU ?
I WONDERED... I DIDN'T SEE THE FATHER, AND I'D LIKE TO...
OF COURSE. I'LL GO GET HIM. HE'D BE HAPPY TO HEAR YOUR CONFESSION.
BLESS YOU, MAGGIE.

SIGH
I ADORE VICARIOUS JOY!
HIS WHOLE BODY JUST RELAXED. WHOEVER'S VOICE THAT WAS--HE LOVES HER.

THAT'S ALL ? WE'RE OFF ?
HE JUST NEEDED TO HEAR HER VOICE.


WHAT KIND OF A MAN AM I TRAVELING WITH ?

HEY POPS, SLOW DOWN.

JUST HAND OVER YOUR CASH, GENTLE-LIKE.
NO! I WON'T!
OKAY, I OFFERED TO BE GENTLE.

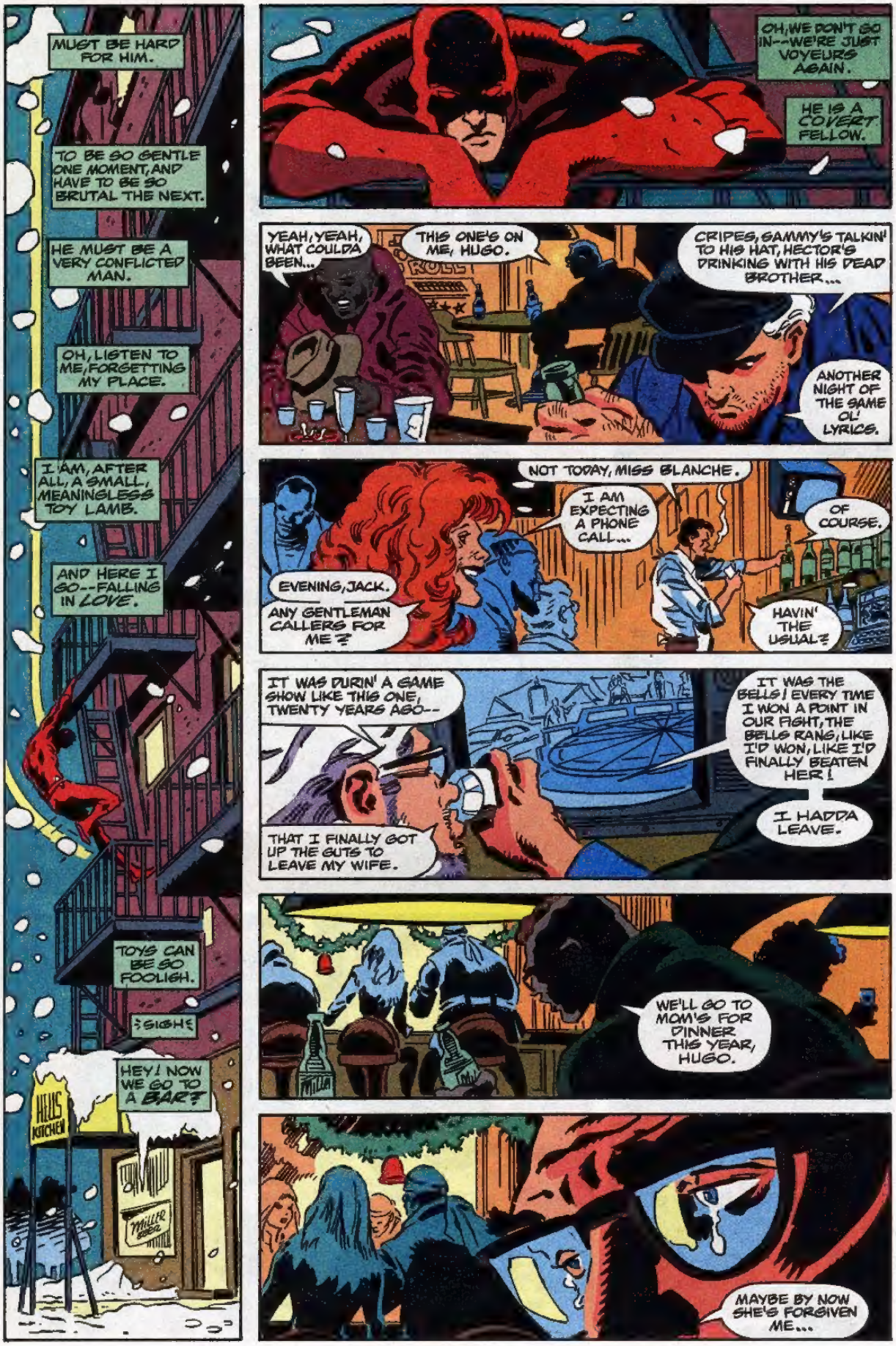
POK
POK
DARN! IT'S HIM!

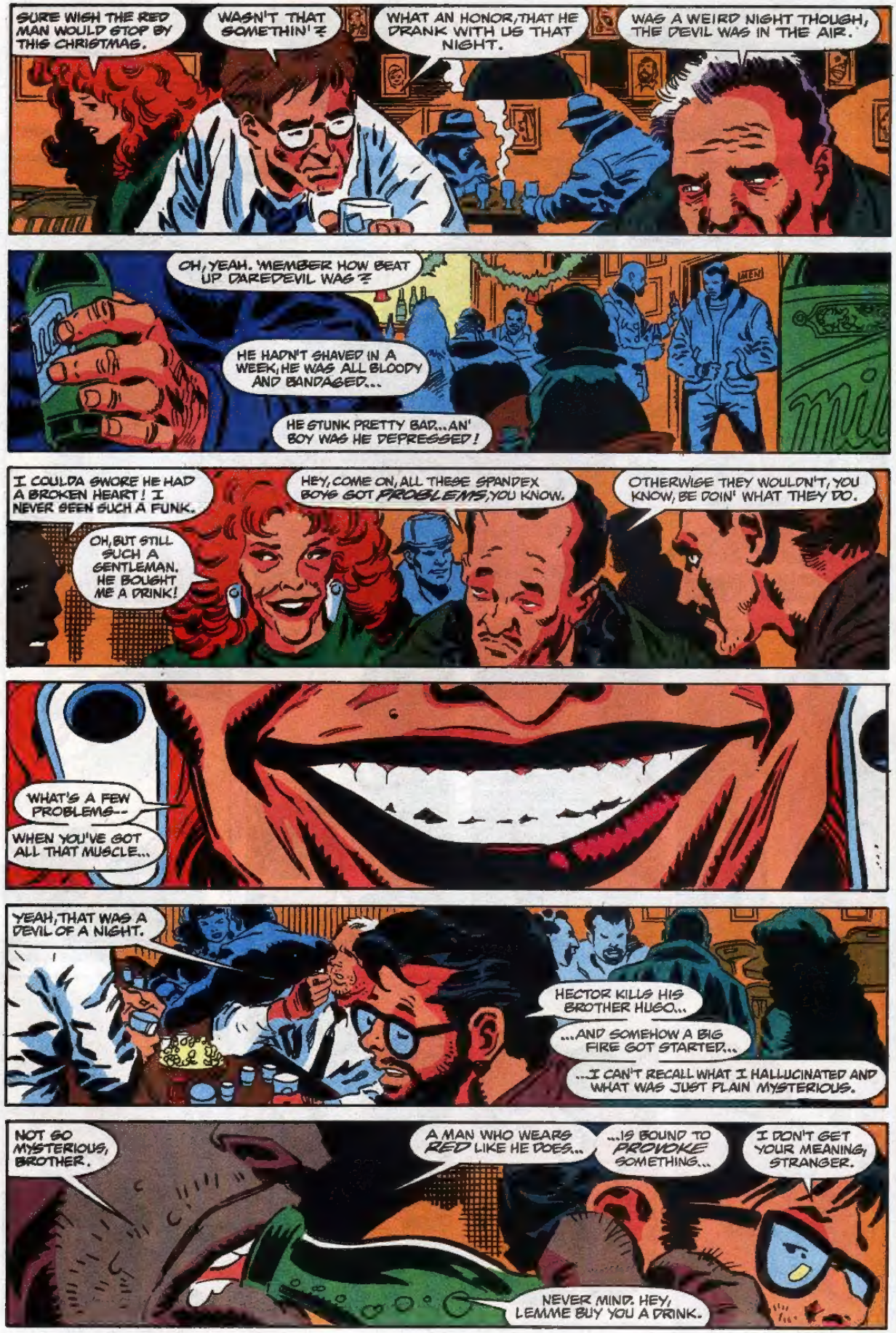
DON'T HURT ME!

UGHHH...

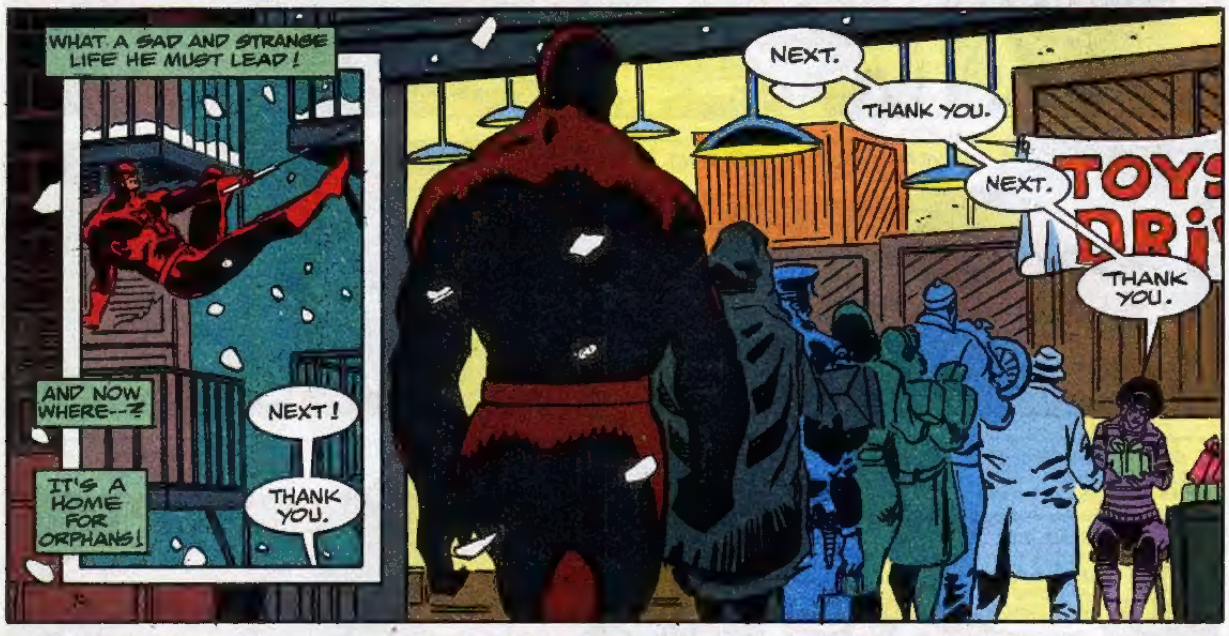
HE'S A HERO!
HE SAVED THAT GUY--AND THE GUY DIDN'T EVEN THANK HIM.
OH, NO! HE MIGHT NOT KNOW HE DROPPED ME!

SIGH
HE KNEW.


MUST BE HARD FOR HIM.
TO BE SO GENTLE ONE MOMENT, AND HAVE TO BE SO BRUTAL THE NEXT.
HE MUST BE A VERY CONFLICTED MAN.
OH, LISTEN TO ME, FORGETTING MY PLACE.
I AM, AFTER ALL, A SMALL, MEANINGLESS TOY LAMB.
AND HERE I GO--FALLING IN LOVE.
TOYS CAN BE SO FOOLISH.
SIGHS
HEY! NOW WE GO TO A BAR?
HELL'S KITCHEN
MILLER BEER
OH, WE DON'T GO IN--WE'RE JUST VOYEURS AGAIN.
HE IS A COVERT FELLOW.
YEAH, YEAH, WHAT COULDA BEEN...
THIS ONE'S ON ME, HUGO.
CRIPES, SAMMY'S TALKIN' TO HIS HAT, HECTOR'S DRINKING WITH HIS DEAD BROTHER...
ANOTHER NIGHT OF THE SAME OL' LYRICS.
NOT TODAY, MISS BLANCHE.
I AM EXPECTING A PHONE CALL...
OF COURSE.
EVENING, JACK.
ANY GENTLEMAN CALLERS FOR ME?
HAVIN' THE USUAL?
IT WAS DURIN' A GAME SHOW LIKE THIS ONE, TWENTY YEARS AGO--
IT WAS THE BELLS! EVERY TIME I WON A POINT IN OUR FIGHT, THE BELLS RANG, LIKE I'D WON, LIKE I'D FINALLY BEATEN HER!
I HADDA LEAVE.
THAT I FINALLY GOT UP THE GUTS TO LEAVE MY WIFE.
WE'LL GO TO MOM'S FOR DINNER THIS YEAR, HUGO.
MAYBE BY NOW SHE'S FORGIVEN ME...


SURE WISH THE RED MAN WOULD STOP BY THIS CHRISTMAS.
WASN'T THAT SOMETHIN'?
WHAT AN HONOR, THAT HE DRANK WITH US THAT NIGHT.
WAS A WEIRD NIGHT THOUGH, THE DEVIL WAS IN THE AIR.
OH, YEAH. 'MEMBER HOW BEAT UP DAREDEVIL WAS?
HE HADN'T SHAVED IN A WEEK, HE WAS ALL BLOODY AND BANDAGED...
HE STUNK PRETTY BAD...AN' BOY WAS HE DEPRESSED!
MEN
I COULDA SWORE HE HAD A BROKEN HEART! I NEVER SEEN SUCH A FUNK.
OH, BUT STILL SUCH A GENTLEMAN. HE BOUGHT ME A DRINK!
HEY, COME ON, ALL THESE SPANDEX BOYS GOT PROBLEMS, YOU KNOW.
OTHERWISE THEY WOULDN'T, YOU KNOW, BE DOIN' WHAT THEY DO.
WHAT'S A FEW PROBLEMS--
WHEN YOU'VE GOT ALL THAT MUSCLE...
YEAH, THAT WAS A DEVIL OF A NIGHT.
HECTOR KILLS HIS BROTHER HUGO...
...AND SOMEHOW A BIG FIRE GOT STARTED...
...I CAN'T RECALL WHAT I HALLUCINATED AND WHAT WAS JUST PLAIN MYSTERIOUS.
NOT SO MYSTERIOUS, BROTHER.
A MAN WHO WEARS RED LIKE HE DOES...
...IS BOUND TO PROVOKE SOMETHING...
I DON'T GET YOUR MEANING, STRANGER.
NEVER MIND. HEY, LEMME BUY YOU A DRINK.

HE'S TENSING UP.
MAYBE HE'S HEARD ENOUGH.
I WONDER, ABOUT MY NEW FRIEND.
ALL THESE VISITATIONS, TO A CHURCH, A BAR...


WHAT A SAD AND STRANGE LIFE HE MUST LEAD!
AND NOW WHERE--?
IT'S A HOME FOR ORPHANS!
NEXT!
THANK YOU.
NEXT.
THANK YOU.
NEXT.
THANK YOU.

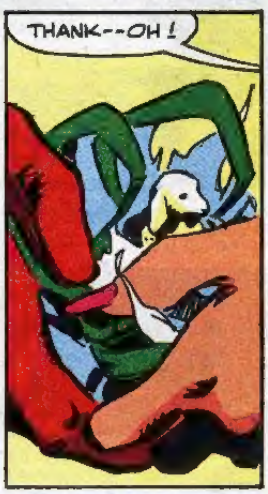
NEXT!
THANK YOU.

NEXT.
THANK YOU.

NEXT, THANK YOU.

NEXT!

THANK YOU.
NEXT.


THANK--OH!

WHAT A LOVELY LAMB! OH, IT'S YOU! HELLO! HOW SWEET, YOU ARE AN ANGEL.

THANK YOU! SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!
SIGH

THE END

BEST WISHES
from Everyone at
Mighty Marvel!